

Friday March 8 1996

Aba Dhabi D 8.50	Hong Kong HKS 25	Pakistan PKR 70
Albania L 220	Hungary F 200	Poland Z 5.70
Andorra FF 10	Indonesia ID 105	Portugal E 220
Austria AS 29	India Ru 85	Qatar QR 6.00
Bahrain BD 2.00	Israel IS 5.98	Romania RON 2.00
Belgium BF 90	Italy L 3.000	Saudi Arabia SR 10
Canada CA 1.00	Jordan JD 1.25	Slovakia SK 55
Costa Rica CR 100	Kuwait KD 3.00	Slovenia SIT 250
Cyprus CE 1.00	Labrador US\$ 2	Spain P 225
Czech Republic KCAS	Lithuania LT 200	Sweden SK 16
Denmark DK 15	Luxembourg LF 50	Switzerland SF 3
Egypt E 5	Malaysia MY 4.00	Thailand B 80
Finland F 5	Mexico M 16	Turkey TL 100.00
France FF 11	Netherlands G 4.00	USA US\$ 2.00
Germany DM 3.50	Norway NK 15	UK GB 2.75
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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,495

Chomsky on Harry Truman

Review

Wild European weather

Mole people of New York

Plus: The new A&R men

Exclusive interview

Chris Patten: how Asia has changed me



This section, page 9

Leaked letter from Lang exposes cabinet row

Major retreats on ending job rights for 10m

Patrick Wintour and Suzanne Milne

JOHN MAJOR yesterday beat a hasty tactical retreat over leaked government plans, championed by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, designed to remove all employment protection rights for up to 10 million employees working in small firms.

A leaked letter written by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, revealed that Mr Heseltine has been privately pressing Cabinet colleagues to court disgruntled small businesses by barring access to industrial tribunals to between five million and ten million workers.

Opposition parties and unions claimed the move heralded the introduction of an era of crude hire-and-fire employment practice across industry.

Mr Heseltine — who runs the Government's deregulation programme and is committed to making the enterprise centre of Europe — wanted to make the announcement a centrepiece of a small business conference convened by the Institute of Directors next Monday.

But in a letter sent this Tuesday and leaked to the Liberal Democrats, Mr Lang fiercely resists the move, suggesting any such proposal would be "deeply controversial" and possibly illegal.

The revelation, and subsequent disarray in Whitehall, is deeply embarrassing since most Economics and Employment Ministers believe the top political priority for the Government is to increase, rather than undermine, job security.

Working poll

- 2 million people work in small firms with fewer than 25 employees.
- New out of 10 businesses employ fewer than 20 workers.
- Last year 91,500 employees took strike action in industrial tribunals.
- Four in 10 claims to industrial tribunals come from firms with fewer than 25 employees.
- 25% of claims involving small firms covered wage issues, followed by redundancy, sex discrimination, unfair dismissal and race discrimination.

Austin



AS SHOWN AS THE BUSINESS GETS SMALL ENOUGH WELL SHOCK A FEW

In an effort to strangle the controversy at birth, John Major told MPs at Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons that Mr Heseltine's dramatic announcement would not be made on Monday.

During the Commons exchanges with both Opposition leaders, Mr Major stressed the need to reduce burdens on small firms saying: "There can be no employment rights if there is no employment."

What we are seeking to do is to maintain a fair balance between the rights of employees and the burdens on employers. We are therefore proposing to reduce or remove unnecessary burdens.

Mr Lang's letter shows his deep concerns that the proposal could prove unlawful, possibly in view of a recent Lords ruling that government measures cutting back employment rights for part-time workers were discriminatory

against women and in breach of European Union law.

Mr Lang states: "I have to say that I have grave doubts about the wisdom of making any announcement about this particular issue until we have received the law officers' advice. Any suggestion that employees in smaller firms were to be denied employment rights would, of course, be immensely controversial and it might be imprudent to attract such criticism only to have to retract the proposals at a later date."

Mr Lang also queried Mr Heseltine's claim that the tribunal system cost £200m a year.

Employment law experts predicted the move could affect between five to 10 million employees, depending on the size of firm the Government chose to exclude. Most experts said the Government was probably intending to free firms employing 20 or fewer employees. They believe the move would be subject to an immediate High Court challenge on the basis that women are disproportionately employed in small

firms and would therefore be subject to discrimination in breach of European Union law.

Earlier government legislation removing employment rights from all workers employed for less than two years continuously is already being challenged.

Ian Hanford, of the Federation of Small Businesses, said he was "absolutely delighted" by the proposals.

"Employment regulations have been one of the worst burdens to impact on small businesses for many, many years."

But Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat education spokesman, to whom the letter was leaked, said: "The notion that 96 per cent of all businesses shall have the right to hire and fire staff at will with no protection against unfair dismissal is unthinkable."

David Blunkett, the Shadow Employment spokesman, denounced the plans as "the thin end of the wedge and the first step to removing all protection from all employees."

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said: "These proposals would deprive millions of British citizens of any rights at work. It would take Britain back to Victorian sweat shop conditions, reward bad employers and penalise good ones."

Bill Morris, the Transport and General Workers Union general secretary, said: "You cannot build world class companies by making workers second-class citizens."

Announcing a million-pound fund to fight any court action, John Edmonds, leader of the GMB general union, said: "The Government is not running an enterprise economy — it's a slave economy. This is another bungle in the jungle from Tarzan."

Tide change put tanker on rocks

David Fairbairn and Keith Harper

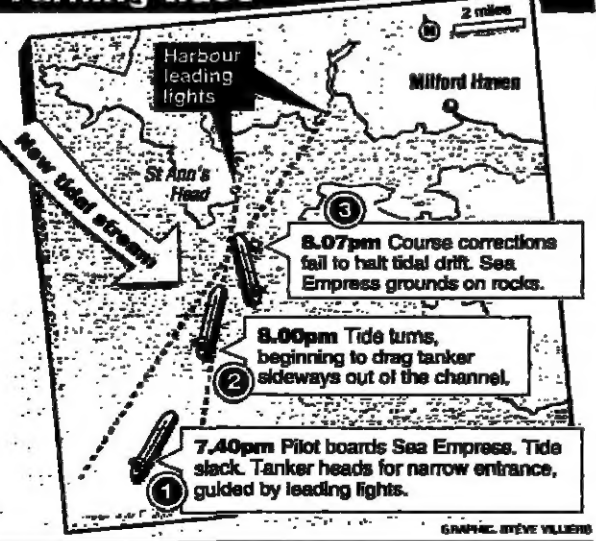
THE oil tanker, Sea Empress, went on to rocks at Milford Haven last month because those in charge of the vessel failed to anticipate a changing tidal stream across the estuary entrance, according to a preliminary investigation published yesterday.

The accident led to a massive oil spill which killed thousands of sea birds, polluted beaches round the coast of west Wales, and reignited controversy about inadequate safety standards and emergency procedures for super-tankers in the crowded seaways around Britain.

As the 147,000-tonne Sea Empress approached the entrance on the evening of February 15, with only metres to spare on either side, and scarcely any water beneath the keel, her Russian captain and local pilot knew the tidal stream was about to turn.

Yesterday's interim bulletin from the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) makes it clear they were hoping they would stay in slack water long enough to complete their entry to the harbour. By the time the changed bearing of the harbour leading lights told them that the

Turning tides



tide had changed and was moving them towards the southern side, it was too late. The tide had taken charge.

The interim bulletin says there was "a shuddering vibration, then a sound from the deck below of liquid being forced under pressure and a strong smell of oil" as the vessel slewed on to the rocks. Both anchors were let go and she came to a stop listing alarmingly to starboard.

The bulletin gives no indication why the Sea Empress attempted the entrance at such an awkward moment — just before low water, in darkness, with the offshore tide on the turn — but this will be a key question for the rest of the inquiry. The investigation will also try to determine how the salvage operation went so wrong, turning what might have been merely a serious grounding incident into an

environmental catastrophe. The MAIB bulletin contradicts rumours that communication difficulties between pilot, captain and helmsman played a part. But it does comment that "the master and the pilot had not discussed and agreed a plan for the approach to the entrance to the west channel".

Last night industry sources suggested the inquiry should investigate whether the Russian captain, who spoke English, and the British pilot, who did not understand Russian, were able to discuss a plan as the crisis developed. They were also concerned that the pilot had boarded the vessel only 27 minutes before she went aground.

Brian Orrell, general secretary of the Merchant Navy Officers' Association, said: "The inquiry must take account of the number of pilots, and whether the pilot who went out to the Sea Empress had sufficient time to deal with the situation, given the bad weather."

"But the inquiry should also be examining the broader issues, about the types of ship which are permitted to use our ports, and the kind of training available."

The MAIB's full report to the Transport Secretary will be published in about a year.

Patten looks to low-tax future

Alex Brummer in Hong Kong and Michael White

CHRIS PATTEN yesterday set out his stall for a post-1997 bid for the Tory leadership after five years as Governor of Hong Kong in which he has come to accept that lower taxes and public spending are vital to renewed economic vitality in Britain.

In a wide ranging interview with the Guardian at Government House, he disclosed that he had received several offers of a seat from Conservative associations around Britain but had "courteously and firmly turned them down". It was enough to have some rightwingers "choking on their cornflakes."

In London, John Major, whose visit to the territory this week and lavish praise for Mr Patten triggered the latest leadership furore, did his best to dampen it by reminding jeering Labour MPs that "What I actually said was that there are a number of colleagues with outstanding ability" who might succeed him.

Mr Patten insisted that the Prime Minister had simply answered a reporter's question. They had spent more time discussing the leadership of "Mr Atherton and Mr Illingworth" than the Conservative Party. He would not be fighting the next general election, since his term ends in

July 1997, after the final election date.

But Mr Patten left little doubt that he would return to Britain with a very different vision of Toryism formed by his experiences in Asia. No intelligent politician could look at "the balance between tax and spending in Asia and taxation and spending in Europe and not think there are some lessons for Europe."

He made clear that in government he would advocate a shrinking of the public sector and a lower taxation regime.

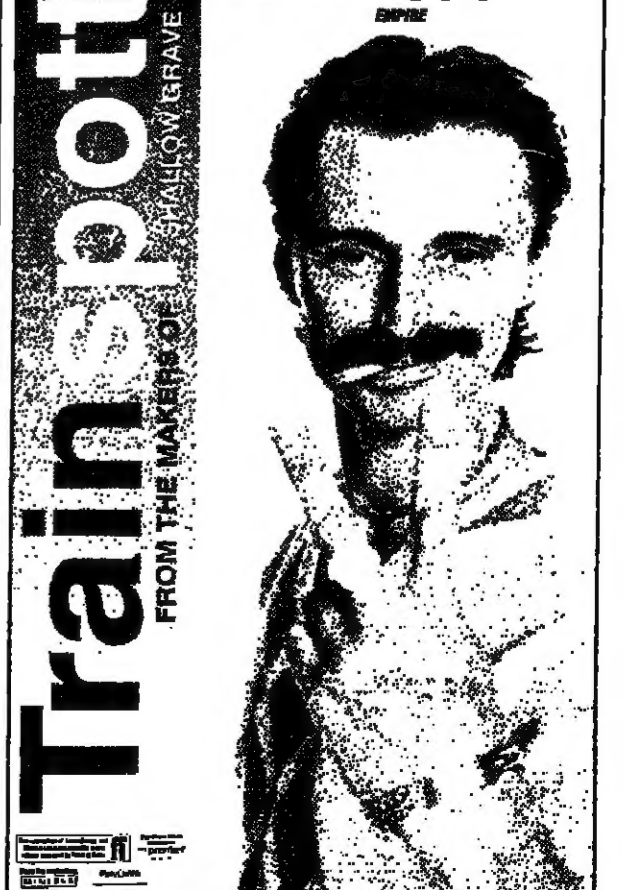
He had concluded, while in Hong Kong, that there had to be a relationship between sluggish growth, high unemployment and public spending. "I do believe we must reduce the role of the state in the economy in the medium and long term."

Mr Major was careful not to draw such conclusions when he spoke to MPs after his visit, but he did say: "I think many people across Europe have utterly failed to realise the sheer size and scale of change that has taken place across Asia and the opportunities that are provided as a result."

As for his decision — at Mr Patten's behest — to grant 2.5 million Hong Kong Chinese the right of entry to Britain without visas, he told the Commons 1.2 billion people already had such rights.

Still the governor, page 9
Myths of Patten's pattern, page 12

★★★★★
Hollywood come in please your time is up...*Trainspotting* is here and it's toe-curlingly good



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2 NEWS

Sketch
How Joe deflated my early hubris



Simon Hoggart

A DULL day in the Commons, so I decided to write about Joe... Joe was deputy news editor of the Guardian in Manchester when I joined the paper...

Prospect of referendum is aimed at calming Tory rightwing critics ahead of European white paper

PM hint on single currency

Michael White
Political Editor

JOHN MAJOR yesterday dangled the prospect of an early government commitment to a referendum on British membership of a single European currency...

could be a necessary step... But he added: "At present, the Government is considering the circumstances in which a referendum might or might not be appropriate."

would prefer to delay that moment because they know that while a decision on a single currency is at least two years away... Michael Heseltine and Michael Portillo have also had doubts...

There are signs they are wavering in the interest of cabinet unity, leaving Mr Clarke appearing isolated... On Radio 4's Today programme yesterday...

"I'm not a federalist. I believe in a union of nation states... Let's decide whether it's in this nation state's interest to go in or not when we see what the animal looks like...

will be debated on Thursday week, March 21, rather than next Thursday... Lamont fired a shot across his leader's bow at Question Time...

Home loan cut set to boost Clarke

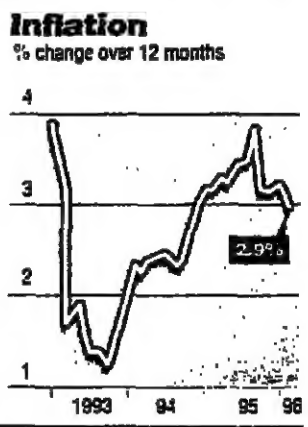
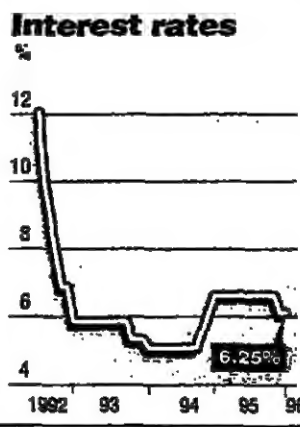
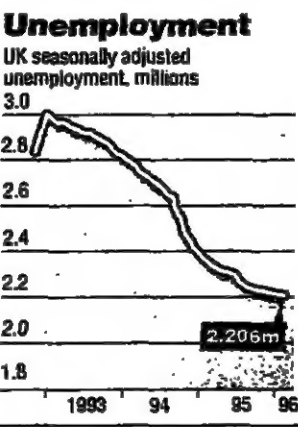
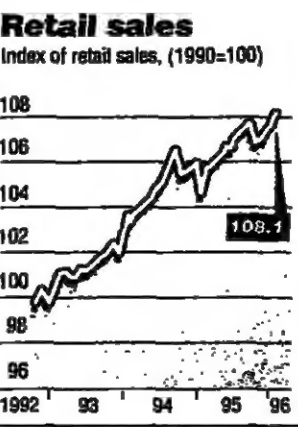
Larry Elliott and Sarah Ryle

THE City is preparing today for the third cut in interest rates since the Budget as the Government seeks to capitalise on the most buoyant retail conditions since the late 1980s...

"So Eddie and I will sit down, look at each other across the table, have our usual discussion talk about how to get inflation down to 2.5 per cent... John Sheppard, chief economist with Japanese bank Yamaichi, said: "Every man and his dog out there believes there is going to be a rate cut."



Walking back to happiness... The rise in shoe sales is seen as an indicator of a reviving economy



First night
New themes in Synge-song land

Michael Billington

realise, is not so much wistful as severely damaged... McDonagh also brings a post-modern irony to his Synge-song fable...

The CBI's quarterly distributive trades survey showed shops and stores starting to push up prices in response to stronger spending...

Mr Clarke did little to dispel speculation about a rate cut on Radio 4 yesterday... He said he was "very, very" about the economy...

Doctors speak out against criminal prosecution threat

DOCTORS yesterday spoke out against a growing threat of criminal prosecution over clinical mistakes or negligence...

be their patients' interests... The BMA was voicing its concern at the rising number of medical files...



Radio 1 blacklists 'unsuitable' latest single by The Beatles

Michael Ellison
Arts Correspondent

STATUS Quo were one thing, indeed some would say they were one song... But yesterday the nation's biggest pop radio station turned positively iconoclastic...

listeners is rubbish. Our research after the Beatles' Anthology was launched revealed that 41 per cent of buyers were teenagers... about 250 singles are released each week...

Patient turns gun on himself

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

STAFF at a mental health clinic watched in horror as a patient shot himself in the head after they failed to persuade him to lay down a gun... Security is to be reviewed at the 24-hour emergency clinic...

into hospital now if you are really very disturbed... While we want to provide an open facility so that people who are ill can come to the clinic...

rail sell-off & the judiciary

To command respect, a legal system must approximate justice. Yet our Courts have failed to apply to Ministers the standards and penalties that apply to Local Government...

Now the Shadow Lord Chancellor warns against "judicial supremacism." But the Judiciary is not obliged to defer to Ministers or Parliament when conduct or statutes are not consistent with natural justice...

But the Head of the Judiciary is in the Cabinet and implicated in all Government decisions; judges may be seen to be compromised by that connection...

Until the Lord Chancellor leaves the Cabinet, the Judiciary's moral authority will be in dispute... Under such grave circumstances, all contentious Government actions, such as rail privatisation, should not proceed...

Suzon Forsey-Moore, Adviser
Action for Justice, PO Box 54, Cambridge CB5 8BB
Tel/Fax: 01223 327634 a4j.info@msunicon.org

YES, THE JUDICIARY MUST BE INDEPENDENT
I endorse Action for Justice's demand for an independent judiciary, a halt to all contentious Government activities including rail privatisation and a remedial judicial review process.

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ope hit
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diseases

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Europe hit by return of diseases

Tim Radford
Science Editor

THE World Health Organisation last night launched a bid to halt the alarming spread of once-forgotten diseases across Europe. Officials want \$20 million (about £13 million) and co-operation in a 10-point programme to contain cholera, diphtheria and sexually transmitted diseases, and to collaborate against invasion by terrifying infections from the Tropics.

Since 1990, syphilis infections in eastern Europe have risen dramatically.

Cholera cases have risen ninefold, mostly in the Black Sea region, to 2,833 cases.

Diphtheria, once almost eliminated, has returned. Last year there were 52,000 cases and 1,500 deaths, but the rate of infection has grown so fast that experts have begun to brace themselves for up to 200,000 infections.

The alarm is far wider than the European Union: the "Europe" of the WHO stretches from Greenland to the Mediterranean, and across Siberia to the Russian Pacific, taking in 50 countries and 850 million people. It includes many nations once in the Soviet Union. Up to 1990, despite the cold war, Western and communist nations co-operated in disease control and surveillance. Measles was rare, cholera almost unknown and polio — already extinct in the Americas — was dwindling swiftly.

"What happened?" asked Jo Asvall, regional director of the WHO at a London conference yesterday. "There was a very happy event, which was the collapse of the communist system and the emergence of many new countries. Unfortunately at the very same time we had a fantastic economic collapse of those countries — a country like Moldova lost 60

per cent of its gross national product in three years. Kyrgyzstan 50 per cent in three years, and so on."

As economies crumbled, immunisation programmes collapsed, and fundamental services — water and sewage and disease surveillance — also faltered.

"In consequence we are seeing a re-emergence of diseases that we thought were safely behind us. Communicable diseases won't stop at border crossings," Dr Asvall said.

The most alarming had been diphtheria. More than 80 per cent of all the world's infections had occurred in the former eastern bloc last year. Half of all the cases in Ukraine were among adults, which suggested that earlier immunisation had only been partial. "Imported" infections had already turned up in Finland, Norway, Mongolia, Poland and Germany.

The WHO also wants funds to redouble efforts to eliminate polio worldwide. Around 60 million children in 18 countries in the eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus region were immunised in 1995. The WHO had planned to wipe out the virus in Europe, but infections in Chechnya rose to 130 during the war.

All this was against a sharp rise in sexually transmitted diseases in eastern Europe, with an associated risk of the spread of AIDS. There was increased need for surveillance against HIV virus from the Americas, and dramatic fevers such as Ebola from Africa. Tuberculosis was on the increase worldwide: in the next decade there would be 90 million infections.

"There will be 90 million cases because tuberculosis does not always develop in infected people. Thirty million people will die of tuberculosis in the next 10 years — more than from AIDS, malaria and tropical diseases together."

Labour leader's wife faces accusations of leftwing influence from Tory newspapers



A tale of two Tonys... Tony Benn, left, and Tony Booth, second right, on the same election platform with Cherie Blair in Thanet North in 1983.

Express puts Cherie Blair in dock

Tabloid digs for 'incriminating' details of 1983 election campaign

Patrick Whitehouse
and Andrew Guff

FRESH signs that the rightwing press intends to target Cherie Blair, wife of the Labour leader, in the run-up to the general election emerged yesterday when the Daily Express placed local newspaper adverts asking for details of her Thanet North election campaign in 1983.

Conservative Central Office, having witnessed the damage Hillary Clinton has done to the popularity of Bill Clinton, intend to portray Mrs Blair, formerly Cherie Booth, as an unconstructed leftwinger who betrays the real nature of the Labour Party.

The advert, placed in the Thanet Times, implies that Daily Express journalist Peter Hitchens is innocently seeking souvenirs.

It reads: "Do you remember 1983? The Daily Express is looking for mementoes of Cherie Booth's parliamentary campaign in early 1983. We would like to see leaflets and election addresses, and would also like to hear about speeches she made in Margate and Ramsgate. If you can help, please contact Peter Hitchens in confidence." The advert then gives a free telephone number.

Mr Hitchens has already published one article about Mrs Blair's 1983 general elec-

tion campaign, largely based around a photograph of her sitting on an election platform accompanied by her father Tony Booth, the actor, and Tony Benn, who had recently been defeated in his campaign to win the deputy leadership.

The story carried the headline: "Two Tonys who taught Cherie about Socialism... and neither was her husband."

The local Labour Party has been reluctant to give Mr Hitchens a copy of Mrs Blair's manifesto, which is also being sought by the Daily Star.

Mr Blair has already found his 1982 Beaconsfield by-election manifesto repeatedly wheeled out against him by Conservative Central Office, the sitting Tory MP, was radically different.

Mr Hitchens, however, has a reputation likely to strike fear into the hearts of Labour's spin doctors.

The former member of the Socialist Workers' Party was hauled back from his job as Moscow correspondent during the last election to snap at the heels of Neil Kinnock. He was instrumental in the breaking of the "Jenniffer's East" story which severely damaged Labour's campaign.

In the past year Mrs Blair, a barrister, has been targeted by the Daily Mail and the Express, with reporters trailing her on obscure court cases around the country.

Last month the Daily Mail — dubbing her "cabinet-maker Cherie" — suggested she was "behaving like Hillary Clinton as an unelected power behind the throne". Her offences, in the eyes of the paper, had been to let slip one of the Labour's worst-kept secrets that Lord Irvine of Lairg will become Lord Chancellor if the party wins power.

The same book launch party produced another Mail headline: "Cherie pledges to boost gay rights". Photographs of Mrs Blair and Mrs Clinton accompanied the story as the paper suggested there were "echoes of Hillary Clinton in Mrs Blair's vision of power".

DO YOU REMEMBER 1983?

The Daily Express is looking for mementoes of Cherie Booth's parliamentary campaign in early 1983. We would like to see leaflets and election addresses, and would also like to hear about speeches she made in Margate and Ramsgate.

If you can help, please contact Peter Hitchens, in confidence, on 0800 376 8000, ext. 7467

Thanks for the memory: the Express ad in the Thanet Times



Peter Hitchens... Likely to strike fear in Labour's heart

'Bias is my trade'

THE wit and wisdom of Peter Hitchens:

"Biased reporting is my trade these days... The trouble is that, while I am quite open about what I do... some others are not. I refer, of course, to the BBC..." — 1995

"In this age of smoking bans and seatbelts, how about some safety legislation to keep young men and women from entering politics until they have done a real job. Such a law would have saved Neil Kinnock from his present fate." — 1993

"I looked across the table and saw the mocking face of Old Death in the same room as me. Dead eyes, dead face, dead skin, dead hair, hands shaped for carrying coffins." — on Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, 1994

"She has abandoned the suburban sadism which she learned from Ian Brady all those years ago, only to replace it with the jargon of self-justification." — on Mrs Hinchey's letter to the Guardian, 1995

"As one of the British correspondents who covered the execution in Georgia last year of Nicholas Ingram (and the only one to witness it), I experienced a certain amount of disdain from one or two of my colleagues, because I felt Mr Ingram's punishment was both merited and just. This lofty scorn is the normal response of the conformist elite class which now dominates most areas of British public life." — 1996

Cross-border contagion

Diphtheria
Huge epidemic in newly-independent states of former USSR. Europe accounts for 80% of reported cases worldwide, with 1,500 deaths last year. "Imported" infections turned up in Finland, Norway, Mongolia, Germany and Poland.

Cholera
Registered cases increased nine-fold in Europe between 1993 and 1994. 2,833 cases in Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Romania, Russia.

Malaria
Number of cases in Europe grown from 20,000 in 1992 to more than 100,000 in 1995, mostly in Turkey, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan.

Tuberculosis
40% - 50% of new cases of TB in western European countries occur in migrant populations. Worldwide one person is infected with TB every second, with 30 million expected to die in next 10 years.

Syphilis
Sharp increase in former USSR — up to 10 times higher than 10-20 years ago. Prostitutes from eastern Europe are moving west, spreading risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

US court legalises euthanasia

Controversial ruling set to trigger a bitter political and ethical row

Martin Walker
in Washington

EUTHANASIA is now legal and protected by the United States constitution, a federal appeals court has ruled by a margin of eight to three, in a historic judgment which overturned a state's attempt to outlaw doctor-assisted suicide.

In over 200 years of US law, a constitutionally protected right to medical aid to kill oneself has never been asserted by a high court. The stage is now set for a tumultuous national debate, with profound international implications, if euthanasia becomes commonplace in the US.

"There is a constitutionally protected liberty interest in determining the time and manner of one's own death," said Judge Stephen Reinhardt, summing up for the majority of the federal ap-

The ruling was then cited in a separate court yesterday in Michigan as requiring that all charges be dismissed against Dr Jack Kevorkian, undergoing his third trial for assisting at a suicide.

The legal decision, which will stand unless overturned by the Supreme Court, instantly rendered void the laws passed in the states of Washington and California making it a criminal offence for a doctor or family member or friend to assist at a suicide.

Judge Reinhardt's ruling angered the anti-abortion movement by comparing the decision to terminate one's life to the decision to have an abortion.

He also based his ruling on the 14th amendment of the US constitution. This was also the basis for the assumed "right to privacy" which justified the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe versus Wade decision that there was an inherent constitutional right to have an abortion.

The 14th amendment says "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens", without spelling out what those privileges might be.

Judge Robert Beizer, speaking for the minority of three judges on the appeals panel who dissented from the ruling, warned that reliance on the amendment was unsound, and would lead to greater abuse.

"If physician-assisted suicide is made a constitutional right, voluntary euthanasia for weaker patients, unable to self-terminate, will soon follow," he wrote, in an opinion foreshadowing the ethical debate the legal decision is expected to unleash.

In emotional testimony before the appeals court, family members who supported euthanasia told of being forced by the now overturned law to leave the room when a spouse committed suicide. A daughter whose father had terminal lung cancer, spoke of waiting downstairs for the sound of the gun as he shot himself — "a brutal and awful experience for my children and me".

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She came to realise the underground world was limitless. At each level she heard of deeper, more frightening places, like a cliff which is to be found at the end of a natural tunnel in the Manhattan bedrock. In this cliff, they say, there are hollows where people live like nesting birds, seldom talking to each other but making odd screeching noises.

Review cover story

Agency



sell-off & judiciary

JUSTICE

4 BRITAIN

The Guardian Friday March 8 1996

Tests for would-be clergy will include arranging shapes in sequence and completing questionnaires to check behaviour and motivation



Clerics at a Lambeth conference. Recruitment of priests is to depend more on cognitive tests, with less bias towards Oxbridge PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

Church tries to end 'academic bias'

Madeline Bunting
Religious Affairs Editor

THE Church of England has called in personnel consultants to devise psychological testing of candidates for the priesthood to counterbalance a recruitment bias towards the more articulate and academic.

Applicants will also be subjected to cognitive tests such as playing with shapes, arranging them in sequence and spotting the odd one out, to test their powers of deductive reasoning. Other questionnaires are being drawn up by psychometric consultants to draw out behavioural patterns and test the motivation of prospective priests.

The tests are part of an overhaul of clergy selection which has been given fresh impetus by the Nine O'Clock Service scandal last August when it was discovered that Chris Brain had been "fast-tracked" through his ordination while he was sexually molesting women in his congregation.

The testing, drawn up by Recruitment and Assessment Services, is advocated as a means to correct the "Oxbridge factor" whereby formal academic qualifications have undue weight in the process. The Church is still dominated by university graduates, with a disproportionate number from Oxbridge. The recent survey of General Synod showed that more than 70 per cent of bishops were Oxbridge graduates and nearly 70 per cent of clergy in synod are university-educated.

"The cognitive tests will show more accurately the capacity for logical thought of people without formal academic expertise. Perhaps someone who has left school at 16 could still have the capacity to study theology but it would be masked by a diffidence and lack of confidence," said Christopher Cunliffe, vocations officer for the Advisory Board of Ministry (ABM), the training arm of the Church.

The shift in policy, reported in today's Church Times, will fuel criticism from traditionalists that clergy are going further down the road of becoming a type of counsellor rather than a teacher of doctrinal truth, and that emotional skills are being given greater weight than intellectual skills.

The tests being tried out are expected to be introduced in January at the three day selection conferences. A spokesman for the ABM emphasised that the techniques would not replace the existing emphasis on interviews, and that selection took place within the context of prayer and worship.

Saville & Holdsworth, one of the United Kingdom's foremost psychometric consultants, is advising the Church on interview techniques and is drafting a "personal inventory" in which candidates are asked a series of open-ended questions which establish an appraisal of the personality.

Roy Davis, communications manager of Saville & Holdsworth, said the techniques provided "objective, scientific data" to help employers reach a decision.

News in brief

'Council coppers' could help police

LOCAL authority police forces, dressed in uniforms similar to those of regular officers, could act as "eyes and ears" for the full-time service, an independent report has found. Local authorities should also be free to experiment with private security patrols to augment the work of the police, the study suggests. The inquiry on the role and responsibilities of the police, set up by the Police Foundation and the Policy Studies Institute, suggests that the police will have to make wide-ranging changes because of the high levels of crime, the constraints on public expenditure and an increasingly competitive private security industry. — Duncan Campbell

Hi-De-Hi star Cadell dies



SIMON CADELL, left star of the BBC TV comedy Hi-De-Hi, died yesterday of cancer. He had found he had lymph cancer as he recovered from a heart attack three years ago. Cadell, aged 45, leaves a widow, Becky, and two sons, Patrick, aged 10, and Alec, seven. Despite his illness he appeared in West End productions and won the Olivier Award for his last role in Travels with My Aunt. He played the upper-crust entertainments manager, Jeffrey Fairbrother, at Moplin's holiday camp in Hi-De-Hi, and his TV career also included two series of Enemy at the Door for LWT, three of Life without George, and the comedy Blott on the Landscape. Obituary, page 10

Defector's substitute chosen

CONSERVATIVES in West Devon and Torridge have chosen Tyneside businessman Ian Liddell-Granger, aged 38, to fight the seat for them at the next election following the defection of their MP, Emma Nicholson, to the Liberal Democrats. The Territorial Army major, married with three children, said he would move to the constituency. — Geoffrey Gibbs

More holidays for Britons

BRITONS are taking more holidays, but spend most of their leisure money abroad, says a report by market analysts Mintel. It reveals the British take more than 86 million holidays a year — an average of more than three per household — compared with 74 million in 1990. Even excluding fares to foreign destinations, the British spend more than £25 billion a year on holidays. But only about 40 per cent of that money is spent in the UK, with the rest going abroad.

Sculptor's daughter loses

SCULPTOR Henry Moore's daughter, Mary, yesterday lost the latest round in her battle to gain control of millions of pounds worth of his work. Mary Danowski, aged 49, had appealed against a 1993 High Court ruling relating to the ownership of her father's art work between 1977 and 1983, when he died aged 88. She and her mother helped him set up the charitable Henry Moore Foundation in 1976 to safeguard and promote his artistic legacy. The Appeal Court upheld the 1993 judgment ruling that the foundation owned the Moore work in dispute.

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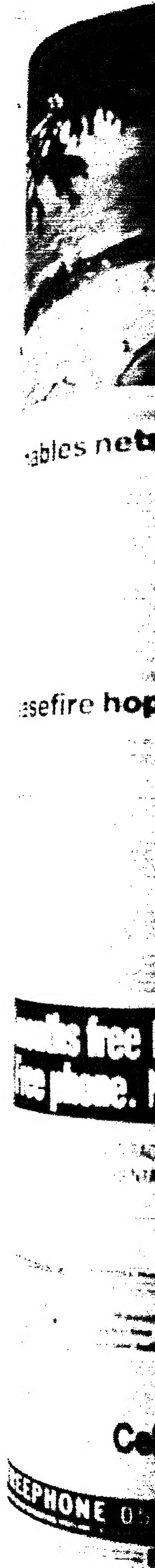
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I am a teapot... A papier maché model is carried to a naive art display at the Towner Art Gallery and Museum, Eastbourne, which runs from March 9 to April 21 PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

Railtrack may face death case

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK may face prosecution over the death of a train driver after being told yesterday to improve safety by the Health and Safety Executive.

Lawyers are studying a file prepared by the British Transport Police after the driver, Alan Griffiths, was hit by a train at Longsight, Manchester, last year as he spoke on a trackside telephone. The Crown Prosecution Service is considering whether there is sufficient evidence of negligence to support a charge of corporate manslaughter.

Railtrack has been reviewing its policy towards trackside phones after a driver was seriously injured when he was struck by a train at Hemel Hempstead in 1995. More drivers are getting mobile phones.

Mr Griffiths died in Manchester Royal Infirmary after being hit by an inter-city train travelling at 60 mph. Railtrack refused to comment about the incident last night.

Clare Short, shadow transport secretary, said: "This is an appalling tragedy, made worse by the fact that it need never have happened. I will be writing to the Government about this case, and to raise the issue of poor safety standards in Railtrack overall."

Ms Short said that the HSE's recommendations on general safety standards also raised doubts about whether Railtrack should be responsible for the safety regulation

and monitoring of itself and its contractors.

The preparation for privatisation and break up of the rail network had led to a serious reduction in standards.

In its report, highlighting Railtrack's methods of using outside contractors, the HSE found "many weaknesses" in the way Railtrack maintained safety.

The report says that the HSE cannot be confident that the risks of accidents will not increase unless Railtrack takes urgent steps.

Inspectors discovered that Railtrack placed considerable reliance on contractors checking their work and did not provide day to day supervision.

Vic Coleman, the HSE's deputy chief inspecting officer of railways, said: "There is no room for complacency. Railtrack must take urgent steps to strengthen its systems and the way they are applied."

"We recognise that shortcomings in formal management systems do not necessarily lead directly to accidents, but they can eat away at safety margins and lead to an increase in risk of harm."

"It must take swift action to deal with these deficiencies."

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union, said: "In the light of this critical report, no responsible government can allow Railtrack to be floated on the Stock Exchange and this move must be halted. The HSE has an obligation to prosecute Railtrack."

Venables nets £50,000 from High Court fixture

Owen Bowcott
and Martin Thorpe

TERRY Venables, dedicated litigator and temporary England soccer coach, was yesterday claiming victory after his latest High Court fixture against a former business partner.

Mr Venables emerged from the nine day legal match with £50,000 damages awarded over a failed pub venture. In a statement last night, he said: "I am delighted with my victory. After three years of legal battles and being castigated by sections of the media the fight to clear my name is bearing fruit. This result is a

personal and financial vindication of me."

But the hearing was not an outright win. His claim for £144,359 was rejected and he received less than his estimated £125,000 costs. His former business partner, Paul Kirby, was ordered to pay £36,089 and £12,973 in interest plus £100,000 of Mr Venables's costs.

Mr Kirby, an FA councillor, claimed even though Mr Venables had won part of the action, the costs ruling could mean him being out of pocket.

In the judgment, Mr Justice Carnwath said that none of the money left unaccounted for in the collapsed firm of Transatlantic Inns was due to

any failure on the part of Mr Venables. Mr Kirby was an "unreliable witness", he said, with a "confused and over-optimistic" view of events.

Mr Venables was trying to reclaim the £144,359 he paid to NatWest bank to clear the company's debts. He said that under an indemnity agreement he was entitled to be reimbursed by Mr Kirby in full or, alternatively, receive one quarter - £36,089 - on the basis that he was a co-guarantor with the partners in the venture.

Mr Kirby and Mr Venables were shareholders, with Colin Wright and David Brown, in Transatlantic, which was compulsorily

wound up on February 3, 1993. The group at one time controlled four pubs - the Cock and Magpie in Epping, Essex; the Royal Oak in Marlow, Buckinghamshire; the Granby Tavern in Reading, Berkshire; and Macey's in Mayfair, London.

In June he faces his former solicitor, Bryan Fugler, who is claiming £300,000 in unpaid fees. Mr Venables is countering for negligence. The following month he will appear before a civil hearing brought by the Department of Trade and Industry which may ban him from acting as a company director.

A libel action over Mr Venables's autobiography brought by the Tottenham chairman, Alan Sugar, and due to be heard in October,

promises the most revelations about the business relationship between the two men.

Mr Venables, the former Tottenham chief executive, also has libel actions pending against the BBC regarding two Panorama programmes, and the Daily Mirror. No date has been set for the cases.

Nor has a date been set to hear Venables's claim for wrongful dismissal from Tottenham in the summer of 1983. It is a daunting fixture list for any player.

Ceasefire hopes fade

IRA's restated position takes it further away from talks table

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

PROSPECTS of the IRA restoring its ceasefire receded further yesterday when it placed itself at odds with London, Dublin and every political party in Ireland except Sinn Fein by describing a number of steps to all-party talks as unacceptable preconditions.

In a bleak summary of the IRA's position, a spokesman told the republican movement's newspaper, An Phoblacht, in an interview published in full yesterday, that there was not "the necessary dynamic to move us all away from conflict".

Senior Sinn Fein sources said they too believed that the

recommendations, attempts to impose decommissioning, attempts to impose acceptance of the so-called principle of "majority consent" or "Unionist veto... are a non-sense," said the spokesman.

He repeated that there would be no arms decommissioning before a final settlement. The British and Irish governments in their communiqué last week agreed that the weapons issue would be the first item on the June 10 talks agenda.

Reaction north and south of the border was more pessimistic than even a few days ago. Michael Ancram, Northern Ireland Minister, said the IRA comments were a slap in the face for ordinary people.

Bertie Ahern, leader of the Irish opposition Fianna Fail, warned that time was running out for peace. There were other republican groups who might be preparing to return to conflict.

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6 WORLD NEWS

Brussels threatens world trade court action to block sanctions on companies trading with Havana

US heads for clash on Cuba

Martin Walker in Washington and John Palmer in Brussels

THE controversial bill designed to force the rest of the world to join the United States economic blockade of Cuba...

The EU, Canada, Russia, Mexico, Brazil and the Caribbean group of Caribbean countries claim the bill rides roughshod over bilateral and international treaties which the US has signed.

It lets the US refuse visas to British employees of such a company (and their relatives), and bars any US bank or stock exchange from doing business with that British company.

to wait and see how the bill is applied - whether President Clinton grants any waivers - but we consider this extension of US jurisdiction has no basis in international law...

share the same goal, establishing democracy in Cuba, but we differ about the best means to achieve that...

tion, newly established as the world's final court of arbitration and judgment under the Uruguay Round of the Gatt treaty...

'This extension of American jurisdiction has no basis in international law'

having been passed 74-22 in the Senate and 336-86 in the House of Representatives, and illustrates the chasm that separates the US from the rest of the planet on the issue of Cuba...

News in brief

US soldiers to serve 7 years for raping girl

THREE US servicemen began prison sentences of up to seven years yesterday for the rape of a 12-year-old primary schoolgirl on the island of Okinawa last September.

The next flashpoint could come before the end of the month, if landowners demand the return of land occupied by the bases as soon as the leases expire.

The seven years given to two of the accused servicemen, and the six-and-a-half received by the third, were tougher than normal rape sentences in Japan.

The prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, said: 'I wonder if, with this, the pain of the child and her family will really come to an end.'

Liberian warlord seizes crew

THREE foreign helicopter crewmen - an American, a German and a Kenyan - were seized in Liberia yesterday by the militia men of a warlord under siege by African peacekeepers in Monrovia, the United Nations said.

The UN special representative in Liberia, Anthony Nyaki, said the men were being held by Ulimo-J militia in the town of Kakata, north-east of Monrovia, in retaliation for the siege of General Roosevelt Johnson's house in Monrovia.

Rioters on rampage in prisons

MUTINIOUS inmates remained in control of five Greek prisons yesterday, demanding improved conditions. The convicts, who include thousands of foreigners mostly from Albania and other eastern European countries, vowed to continue the revolt until the government passed legislation to reform the penal system.

Justice ministry officials said prisoners had gone on the rampage, destroying everything in sight, at jails in Patras, Larissa and on the islands of Corfu, Chios and Crete.

Greek prisons lack basic facilities and there is chronic overcrowding. But yesterday the justice minister, Evangelos Ventouris, said the prisoners would have to end the mutiny before he passed any legislation.

Decision on Papon delayed

A DECISION on whether the former Vichy civil servant Maurice Papon, aged 65, should be sent for an assize court trial for second world war crimes against humanity will probably be delayed until June. High court judges at a Bordeaux preliminary hearing said yesterday it would take three months to decide whether Mr Papon, who ran the Vichy government's Jewish affairs office, was personally responsible for the deportation of 1,699 Jews, including 223 children.

Lawyers acting for surviving relatives said the state prosecutor had alleged during an in-camera plea that Mr Papon, a Gaullist cabinet minister until 1982, knew the deportees were being rounded up by French police on his signed orders. Claims that Mr Papon was too old to stand trial were countered by evidence, gathered during a 15-year judicial investigation, that many of the deportees had been in their eighties, and one was 95.

Pressure renewed on Turkish author

TURKEY'S best-known author, Yasar Kemal, left, was given a 20-month suspended jail sentence by an Istanbul court yesterday for "agreed separatist propaganda".

His publisher, Erdal Oz, right, got a suspended fine. The 73-year-old writer, whose most famous novel, Mehmet My Hawk, has been translated into more than 10 languages, was charged for an article he wrote about the Kurdish problem.

His lawyer, Enver Nalbant, said: "I can't believe it and we are going to appeal. They are tightening up again now, because we have a rightist government."

A conservative coalition government of the Motherland and True Path parties was approved by President Suleyman Demirel this week, and yesterday the prime minister, Tansu Ciller, handed over power. The outgoing human rights minister, Adnan Ekmen, criticised True Path leaders for ignoring his reports on human rights violations.

The cases of four former Kurdish MPs facing separatism charges were adjourned. - Chris Nuttall, Ankara.

World chess championship is switched to Baghdad

Leonard Barden and Victor Keegan

THE International Chess Federation (Fide) dropped a political timebomb yesterday by switching the next world championship from Montreal to Baghdad.

This emerged as the UN Security Council in New York reaffirmed economic sanctions against Iraq on the grounds that Baghdad had not made sufficient progress in meeting its demands.

Kirsan Ilyumjinov, Fide's president, said in Paris that the \$2 million championship between Anatoly Karpov of Russia and the Russian-born American Gata Kamsky would be opened on June 1 in Baghdad by president Saddam Hussein, who would preside over the event in civilian clothing.

Earlier, at the Church of Saint-Germain-des-Près, Father Pierre Gubertaux evoked how the spirituality of the elements had infused the writer of The Lover and Hiroshima, Mon Amour.

Duras's readers, 2,000 of whom had crowded into the church alongside the cream of Parisian intellect, were pleased with the compromise between God and the secular. "What a relief that there was not too much religion, Marguerite never had much to do with God. He is too discreet for her," said Lilo Bernard, an actress in her sixties.

Duras, who wrote 73 novels, directed films and wrote screenplays and plays, died on Sunday, aged 81. She was remembered humbly with some incense, Bach and the Lord's Prayer. But as Fr Pierre said: "This is the time of Duras's readers, 2,000 of whom had crowded into the church alongside the cream of Parisian intellect, were pleased with the compromise between God and the secular."

It is just an honour to have lived in the same century as Marguerite Duras

hers mark the end of an era; the end of the 20th century. But Zappimbulso, like most of those gathered at Saint-Germain-des-Près, found it impossible to put their tribute into words.

Duras was always an advocate of "the impossible". She often alienated her readers because she was apt to force them to be readers of such statements

Rebels humiliate Moscow's men

James Meek in Moscow

RUSSIA'S security forces and their supreme commander, President Boris Yeltsin, suffered another humiliation yesterday at the hands of Chechen separatist fighters who came close to capturing the capital Grozny.

During a second day of heavy fighting, Russian casualties rose to 70 dead and 40 missing, and the separatists got within 300 yards of the headquarters of the region's Moscow-backed government. Yet army reinforcements were held back from the city until 3pm, 30 hours after the Chechen attack began.

Earlier, while officials in Grozny reported that every federal checkpoint in the city was surrounded by the attackers, and some were running out of ammunition, an army spokesman at regional headquarters in Rostov-on-Don - 400 miles away - languidly dismissed the idea of a mass relief attack.

"Fear might make people think there are more of them," said Colonel Yakov Firsov.

Without the army, the defence of Grozny against what most sources now agree are between 600 and 1,000 rebels was left to small groups of interior ministry troops and Chechen police.

Abdullah Bugayev, deputy head of the loyalist administration, said bodies of soldiers and civilians were lying in the streets.

The rebels are reported to have taken over a hospital, a police station and a factory clinic, taken 84 construction workers hostage, and wrecked power lines, pumps supplying drinking water, and oil installations.

Last night the rebels were said to control one-third of Grozny. A local security official said the city would be "purged" this morning with the help of the army, including paratroop units.

One report said the separatist operation was being commanded by Aslan Maskhadov, the chief of staff of the Chechen rebel leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev. Mr Maskhadov had until recently led the rebel delegation in peace talks with federal forces.

In Moscow a meeting of Mr Yeltsin's security council approved two draft plans for a "peaceful settlement" of the Chechen crisis, but preliminary information about the plans suggests no significant initiatives - rather moves to institutionalise the conflict.

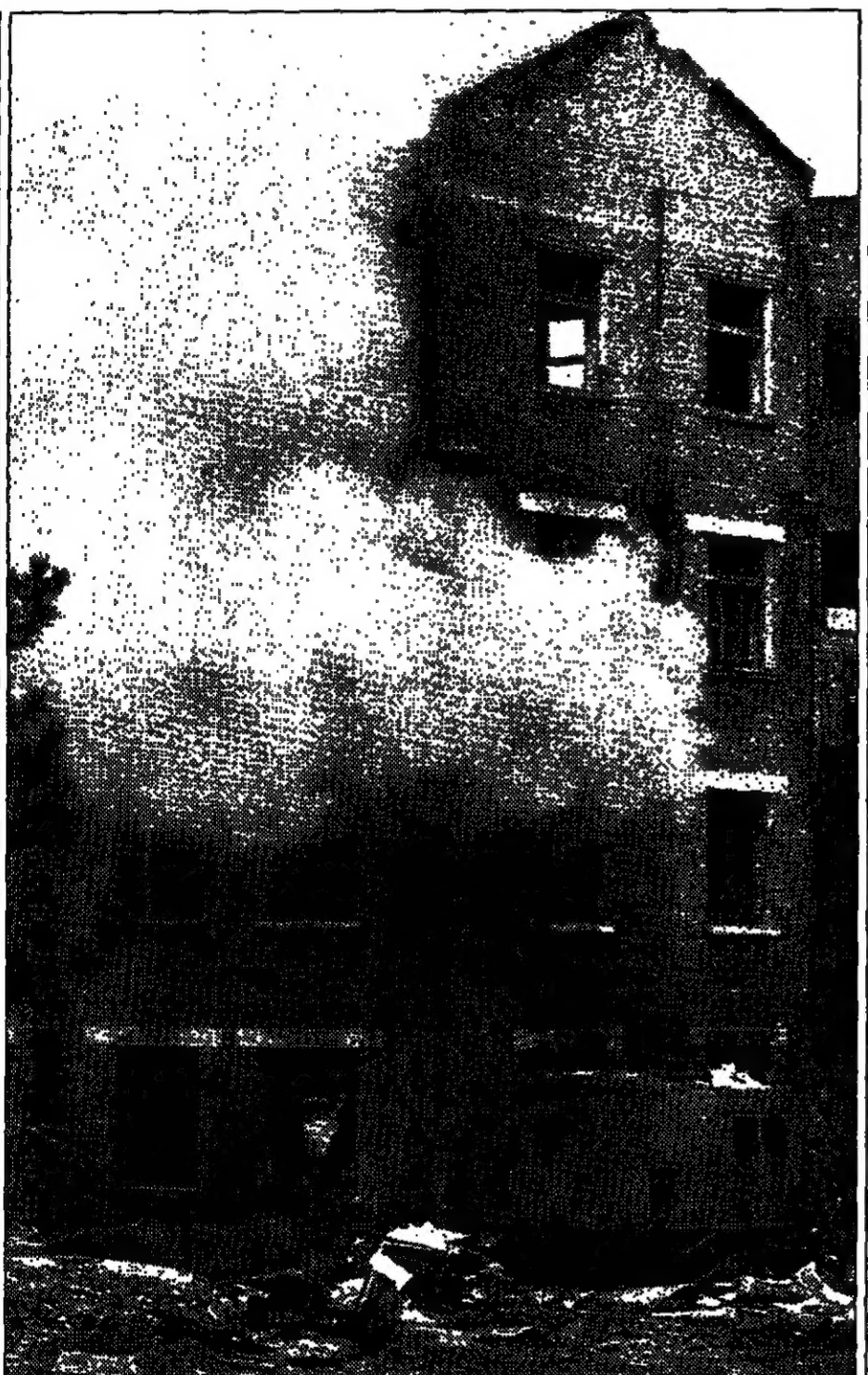
Mr Yeltsin made no public reference to the Grozny fighting, except to claim the city had been cleared of rebels.

He said the plans would involve selective state financing of areas of Chechnya according to how strongly they supported Moscow, together with talks with local communities.

At the same time he made it clear that military action against the rebels would continue. He signed an "anti-terrorism" decree giving unspecified powers to the security forces.

Elsewhere in Chechnya tension continued around the village of Sernovodsk, besieged by Russian troops who claim there is a large detachment of armed rebels inside.

On Wednesday the Red Cross and the International Organisation for Migration were refused permission by the Russians to evacuate civilians from the town.



Fog of war... Smoke from artillery fire billows around houses as Russian troops and rebels clash in Grozny. The rebels were said to control a third of the city last night

Pet Russians, free to good homes

Andrew Harding in Komsomolskaya on Chechnya's top status symbol

BY CHECHEN standards, Arbi Islamov lives well. He has a new Mercedes, a red-brick home in the countryside with its own sauna and mosque, a couple of Kalashnikovs, two rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and of course, his own Russian prisoners of war.

"My wood. My water. Quick!" he bellowed through the sauna door to the three youths outside. Konstantin, aged 20, a Russian conscript from Tumen, obligingly began chopping a pile of logs near the cowshed, while his two colleagues munched down the road towards the well.

"I don't see them as prisoners," he explained as the sweat slid down his lean, bearded face. "They've already written home to their mothers. They can come and collect them whenever they want."

It did not seem appropriate to ask why, if that was the case, they had been taken captive in the first place. But whether it is for exchange, ransom, or as a bribe, the fact is that hostage-taking is on the rise in Chechnya, with Russian construction workers, engineers and even priests considered fair game.

Later, Konstantin whispered nervously that he had written to his mother but did not know if the letter had been posted. "They captured us two months ago at our checkpoint in the fields near here." So he was not a deserter? "No! I swear."

By and large, Russian soldiers being held captive in the hills and mountains of southern Chechnya seem to be well treated by their proud captors, who often regard them as status symbols.

Some of them are indeed deserters, but most are the brutal, sordid, vodka-lined life on the bottom rung of the Russian army.

"Mind you," Mr Islamov said, "we only treat the conscripts like this." Any Russian foolish enough to have volunteered to fight against the Chechens is executed on capture. "We slit their throats," Mr Islamov said, making the relevant gesture.

Sauna over, he wandered into his lavish kitchen, where his wife and his younger sister, Zelnah, were feeding the steady stream of fighters and businessmen who drop in to pay their respects and discuss tactics with the village's richest family.

"It never stops," complained Zelnah, pouring more tea. "They come, they go, day and night - it's like running a restaurant."

The next morning Oleg, a stocky member of a rightwing Ukrainian militia group who had been fighting with the Chechens since the war began, came down to breakfast in a bright orange camouflage suit and a foul mood.

"All quiet" last night, he said, cracking his knuckles and struggling to hide his disappointment. "Can't sleep when there's no shooting."

Oleg, Mr Islamov and his boisterous brother Leichi, had been up analysing the effects which a direct hit would have on Mr Islamov's stadium-sized living room.

Leichi went to fetch his latest toy - a snub-nosed automatic rifle with night-sights, swathed in white camouflage.

The Chechens buy most of their weapons from the Russian army, travelling through their checkpoints with apparent impunity to strike a deal.

"Crazy war," Leichi said. "They sell us the guns, then we shoot them."

He admitted spending several years in Soviet and Russian jails for pursuing his business activities. "Here's your Chechen bandit," he grinned. The image of the Chechens as a uniquely criminal delight in analysing the effects which a direct hit would have on Mr Islamov's stadium-sized living room.

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Fitting end for tempestuous Duras

Alex Duval Smith sees the author laid to rest among the shades of St Germain

LITERARY scholars believe Marguerite Duras's tempestuous personality was rooted in her childhood, spent at the mercy of the Indochinese monsoon. So it was fitting, yesterday, that a Parisian hailstorm hammered her coffin into the ground at Montparnasse cemetery.

Earlier, at the Church of Saint-Germain-des-Près, Father Pierre Gubertaux evoked how the spirituality of the elements had infused the writer of The Lover and Hiroshima, Mon Amour.

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The US and its European allies remain at odds on how to react to alleged Iranian support for terrorism after the recent bombings in Israel. As Arafat cracks down on Hamas, the foreign ministry in Tehran is desperately attempting to distance itself from the blasts



Hair-raising problems... President Yasser Arafat adjusts his keffiyeh head-dress before the inaugural session of the first Palestinian legislative council in Gaza City yesterday

Britain protests to Iran

Richard Merton-Taylor, and Kathy Evans in Tehran

BRITAIN formally protested to Iran last night about its support for Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel, a move apparently prompted by United States pressure on its European allies to take tougher action against Tehran. But it is clear that the US and the European Union remain divided on how to respond to Iran's latest outbursts against Israel, and EU members differ on how to pursue contacts with Tehran.

Though the ministers are likely to agree to some kind of joint EU approach to Tehran, this will not dispense differences between them. Germany, Italy and Greece favour closer ties with Iran than Britain and France. The latter place more emphasis on the "critical" dialogue with Iran, though this position could change if there is hard evidence — which the US claims to have — of direct Iranian involvement in the Hamas bombing campaign in Israel.

Whitehall has made it plain, however, that Britain and its EU partners are not prepared to bow to US pressure to abandon their policy of "critical dialogue" with Iran, though this position could change if there is hard evidence — which the US claims to have — of direct Iranian involvement in the Hamas bombing campaign in Israel.

Iran's relations with European countries are becoming more important to Tehran as it faces a growing American boycott, which threatens not only US oil investment in Iran but participation by European companies as well.

Arafat seeks terror summit

Derek Brown in Gaza City

THE Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, yesterday called for an international summit to tackle Middle East political violence. He told the inaugural session of the Palestinian legislative council, the world's newest parliament, "We will not let violence and terrorism stop the peace process."

He urged "all parties in the world" to discuss, at the highest level, "methods of curbing terrorism as a regional and international phenomenon". President Arafat, in some mood, did not please all the 88 newly elected council members with his strident denunciation of militant factions. Although he did not name the main Islamist group, Hamas, he made it clear that the hunt

for its leaders and activists would be carried on by Palestinian as well as Israeli forces. Hamas has claimed responsibility for four suicide bombings which killed more than 60 people in eight days. Since the outages, Israel has closed its borders to Palestinians and imposed curfews in much of the West Bank.

At least 500 Hamas and other Islamist suspects are now in Palestinian prisons, and hundreds more have been picked up by Israeli forces. The searches have deeply angered many Palestinian leaders, who accuse Israel of stoking up more trouble by inflicting severe hardship on two million people, all but a fraction of whom are bitterly opposed to the Islamist violence.

Old hand tightens its grip on power



Other worlds

David Beresford

ALTHOUGH there is no indication that he intends staying in office beyond his scheduled retirement date in 1999, Nelson Mandela does seem to be developing in his advancing years a taste for power which could prove a disservice to the society he has helped to create.

Mandela's rage is reported to have reduced one MP to tears

At the end of last year, the received wisdom in political circles here was that President Mandela would begin to take things easier in 1996, not only for his health's sake but also to smooth the way for the succession of his political heir, Thabo Mbeki.

Taiwan derides China's 'dumb' missile-rattling

Andrew Higgins in Taipei

ON THE eve of Chinese missile tests within sight of its coast, the nearest of the People's Liberation Army has come since 1949, Taiwan taunted Beijing yesterday with firing "empty and hollow" rockets as Washington warned of "grave consequences" if any missiles go astray.



Show of force... Taiwanese soldiers on exercises this week on the fortress island of Quemoy near the Chinese mainland. It was a flashpoint in 1958

China yesterday made its clearest admission of the political motives for the "ordinary exercises". Shen Guofang, the foreign ministry spokesman, said: "The exercises will be useful not only to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, but also to stamp out efforts to create two Chinas or one China, one Taiwan."

The aim is to weaken support for President Lee and what Beijing reviles as his

camouflaged campaign for independence. "Everything is going according to plan. Nothing has happened yet to let this run away from them," said Robert Broadfoot, head of the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy in Hong Kong. "They can still pull back."

The stance of the United States, which moved its embassy from Taipei to Beijing in 1979 but still helps arm Taiwan, is again central, as during the 1988 confrontation. President Clinton's national security adviser Anthony Lake described China's latest missile-rattling as a "potentially reckless act" and called on it to desist.

But China has shown itself unperturbed by foreign censure. "China will never accept the representations and protests from the US side on this issue," said Mr Shen. "The United States is considering sanctions against China for the transfer of a new cruise missile to Iran, a senior US official said yesterday."

Paramilitary 'cleaners' call the shots

War is being fought between guerrillas and self-defence groups for control of the 'banana belt' of northern Colombia. Phil Gunson reports from Acandí

RAMON CORREA was walking to the neighbouring hamlet of Capitán to buy cheese, when the paramilitaries stopped him. There were about 70 of them, witnesses said later, in army uniforms and accompanied by two deserters from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc).

The group had already killed one alleged guerrilla collaborator. Ramón's name was on their list. His partially buried body was found nearby a week later, stabbed to death. His hands were tied behind his back.

In all five people died that day near Acandí, where the jungles of Panama meet those of Colombia. By Colombian standards it scarcely ranked as a massacre. The Colombian press paid little attention and, four months later, has almost forgotten the events of November 3.

But what happened here marked a new phase in the war for control of one of the country's most strategic — and potentially richest — regions, around the Gulf of Urabá.

News in brief

Two killed in Algeria blast

A bomb ripped through Berrouaghia, a bastion of Algerian Muslim rebels, yesterday, killing two people and wounding 10.

New Scorsese film

The US film director Martin Scorsese and the leading Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani announced a new film yesterday to document the history of Italian cinema. — Reuter.

Bombay collapse

At least 30 people were feared killed when a five-storey building collapsed in north-east Bombay yesterday, police and fire brigade sources said. — Reuter.

Rescue mission

South African newspaper editors are mounting a mission to rescue two of their counterparts from prison in Zambia, writes David Beresford in Johannesburg. The Freedom of Expression Institute is

requesting a meeting with President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia to ask for the release of Fred M'membe, editor-in-chief of The Post and its managing editor, Bright Mwape.

Deaths in custody

Sixteen people have died while in police custody in the Malawi capital, Lilongwe, apparently because of overcrowding. — Reuter.

Cemetery vandals

Vandals broke into a Jewish cemetery in Lübeck, Germany, knocking over grave-stones and painting swastikas on a wall. — Reuter.

Jet spares seized

Jordan seized yesterday that it had seized fighter jet spare parts bound for Iraq from Poland in violation of UN sanctions. — Reuter.

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Workers have rights too

One company's red tape is another person's job

WHO doesn't want to cut red tape? But beware: some regulations are much more than red tape. Some have been put in place to safeguard fundamental rights, like the right to be treated fairly by employers. Not content with the drastic reduction that ministers have already made to workers' rights over the last 17 years — a reduction which has left British workers among the least protected within the European Union — Michael Heseltine clearly wanted to go further. The letter leaked yesterday suggests the Deputy Prime Minister was intent on removing from millions of workers the right to seek damages for unfair dismissal. The leaked letter — from Trade Secretary Ian Lang — clearly warns Mr Heseltine of the controversy he is courting: "Any suggestion that employees in small firms were to be denied employment rights would, of course, be immensely controversial and it might be imprudent to attract such criticism only to have to retract the proposals at a later date." True on both counts: controversy and on the dubious legality of the proposals.

The Prime Minister appeared to squash the proposals at question time. If words mean anything, the Heseltine plan looked "gone, dead, buried". Challenged by the Labour leader, Mr Major said the Government's proposals for small businesses due on Monday would not include the reported proposals. But even to propose them was politically clumsy — and underlines Heseltine's loss of ministerial touch. No one has spoken more forcefully about the need for trade unions to be made subject to the law; but this same principle should apply with equal force to employers. It will do ministers no good — as some later briefings yesterday suggested — to resurrect it. The public repudiation of the Heseltine plan was a well-deserved humiliation. What was just as bad was the glee with which the federation of

small businesses greeted the Heseltine proposals. As they were reminded by the Liberal Democrat leader, a secure small business sector is not achieved by encouraging employers to adopt a crude fire-and-hire mentality.

More constructive proposals emerged yesterday from the all party Commons select committee on employment. The MPs called for more experimental programmes for the long-term unemployed, ranging from an urgent expansion of the existing small-scale "workstart" schemes under which employers receive subsidies for taking on long-term unemployed (which has succeeded in finding them work but been less successful in generating new jobs) to new pilot "workfare" programmes set out in Sir Ralph Howell's Right to Work Bill, under which, instead of receiving benefits, the unemployed would be paid for taking part in socially useful community projects.

The one million long-term unemployed remain the biggest social challenge facing the country. Once out of work for more than a year, individuals are four times less likely to find a job. Worse still is the psychological and physical deterioration that sets in. As medical journals have documented, long-term unemployment causes anxiety, depression, neurotic disorders and premature death. There is no single solution. We need a bundle of programmes: wider training opportunities, better benefit-to-work schemes, more in-work income support schemes and well-structured socially rewarding community schemes. A promising political consensus is emerging. There were echoes in yesterday's report of Gordon Brown's plan for the under-25s. Frank Field, the Labour MP, is supporting Sir Ralph's Bill. Both major parties need to commit heresy: Labour on the notion of an obligation to work; Conservatives on the principle of a right to work.

The folly of Clinton's Cuban heel

US hysteria shouldn't interfere with international trade

THE US CUBAN embargo has now been ratcheted up to a new punitive level which, whether or not it shakes Congress's foe in Havana, is certainly alarming Washington's European friends. Bill Clinton's decision to drop his previous resistance to parts of the Helms-Burton Bill was precipitated by the Cuban airforce's shooting down last month of two civilian planes flown by hostile exile pilots. But the speech yesterday in Miami by Republican candidate Bob Dole, at a Cuban-American rally, reminds us of a weighty political factor too. Mr Dole did his best to outbid Mr Clinton by calling for the indictment and conviction on murder charges of the Cuban airforce pilots — pure theatre since the federal writ hardly runs in Havana. But there are votes to be won — or lost — among the exiles, and the President knows it too.

The Cuban action was certainly a harsh and foolish act at a time when the administration had begun a mild relaxation of restrictions. Wednesday's speech by the Cuban Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina in the Security Council implied that the decision to fire on the planes was taken by the airforce command without direct authorisation from his government. That makes the action easier to understand and the dossier of provocative flights undertaken previously by the "Brothers to the Rescue" is also part of the context. But Cuba was still wrong to be goaded by these gaddy assaults. It is a pity that the embattled state of relations with the

US did not permit Mr Robaina to say that this was a bad mistake.

Yet Havana's over-reaction one afternoon three weeks ago has to be set against the persistent over-reaction of the US for decades to the very existence of Castro's Cuba. Years ago Britain braved Washington's wrath by allowing Leyland buses to be exported to Cuba: members of Congress regarded the sight of double-deckers in the streets of Havana as outright betrayal of the free world. US anti-Castro hysteria has remained at a consistently high level: only Vietnam has (until recently) been more persistently victimised.

The new bill would legalise various forms of action against foreign companies or individuals with interests in Cuba who are deemed to have "trafficked" in property nationalised by the Castro government at any time since the 1960 revolution. The US government could impose trade restrictions and ban visas: US citizens and Cuban-Americans could sue the "traffickers" in US courts. There is a strong case, to be considered today by the EU, for regarding this aspect of the legislation as a violation of world trade rules under the World Trade Organisation. In addition, the bill seeks to dissuade the World Bank or other institutions from providing loans or finance to Cuba "until a democratically elected government is in power". This is a remarkable demand indeed from a country which has handed out billions of dollars of aid to an array of undemocratic regimes.

Counting sheep the hard way

Genetic engineering is a potential threat to human diversity

THE CLONING of sheep — which most of us can't tell apart anyway — may seem an inauspicious place for a great breakthrough in genetic engineering but the implications are awesome. It is now theoretically possible to clone a human being: all the reservations expressed by eminent scientists yesterday won't prevent someone doing it somewhere, sometime. Even if done honourably it is not of obvious advantage to humanity. What's the point of a football team consisting of 11 George Best clones playing another team of clones. It would, arguably, be the Best team in the world but also the most boring because there wouldn't be bad players against whom to measure the good ones. (Drinking in the bar afterwards wouldn't be much fun either).

Futurists talk of producing a generation of Einsteins, but who can recognise genius in embryonic cells? Einstein didn't come from particularly clever

parents and was told by his teacher that he would never amount to anything. More likely, as geneticist Dr Patrick Dixon said yesterday, that someone like Saddam Hussein would be fascinated by watching himself grow up. Cloning may have gone further than we realise if yesterday's news is true that someone called Saddam Hussein will preside over the June world chess championship in Baghdad. The real Saddam would hardly dare appear in public.

The cloning of animals and plant life carries dangers because genetically identical sheep or tomatoes could be wiped out by a sudden disease. Humans may see genetic engineering as an insurance against vanishing fertility or computers getting too smart, but we should pride diversity above all else. In this sense nature really does know best. Apart from the pleasure involved, mating spreads destiny's risks. Thank goodness for sex.



Letters to the Editor

Purpose of the prince

YOUR article and editorial on the future of the monarchy (March 6) is long overdue and most welcome. We, on this side of the water, have had many debates on the subject, as it is considered by many people here to be one of the pillars of the sectarian scourge that divides us. Why must Britain be the only country in Europe that decrees its head of state to be of one particular religion (ie C of E Protestant)? This concept alone is the reason d'être of such arcane organisations as the Orange Order and all the mayhem that divides us. It gives resonance to the view that to be a real British citizen, one must be a Protestant.

We, the Queen's Catholic citizens in Ulster, may also wonder at the absence of the word, deed or personage of the monarch at the funerals of the hundreds of innocent Catholics murdered by loyalist organisations who swear allegiance to her — in contrast to the high-profile condemnations of Warrington and Canary Wharf.

Is it not time we had a head of state who was perceived by all the nation as less political and sectarian and was a respecter of all creeds and beliefs including anti-monarchist? Joe Phelan, Ballynahinch, Co Down, Northern Ireland.

YOUR poll asks who was responsible for Prince Charles's broken marriage. How should I know? I would not presume to apportion blame between two of my most intimate friends, so how much less between two people whose lives I only know from the pages of newspapers and their own prejudiced utterances. My grandmother once told me never to interfere between husband and wife because "nobody knows what happens when the bedroom door closes". Andrea Marks, 148 Edgeware Lane, Edgware, Middx HA8 8NE.

THE noteworthy finding of your ICM poll is that a substantial minority does not see Prince Charles as the break-up of his marriage. This, in the face of the propaganda of broadsheets, Princess Diana's appearances and interviews to the media, the statements of one of two bishops and the occasional flirting of the royal family, MPs recognise that the vast majority of the British public support the institution of monarchy and would not support any party whose MPs openly called for its abolition.

Should they decline to do so it would confirm my view that, despite the marital problems of certain members of the royal family, MPs recognise that the vast majority of the British public support the institution of monarchy and would not support any party whose MPs openly called for its abolition. S A Blyth, 44 Wales Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 0ET.

IT IS alarming to note the media attention being given to the monarchy. As a pensioner, and with a general election approaching, I do not want to see political leaders left off the hook of addressing the urgent questions of the economy, unemployment, the disappearing health and social services, ever-diminishing retirement pensions in relation to average earnings, education etc.

This irrelevant diversion, if pursued further, will lead to an even more divided nation, when working together as one people and as members of one society is the crying need. Beryl Urquhart, 28 Estuary Park, Cornwiche, Bridgewater, Somerset TA5 3QP.

NOW, WHOSE VOWS SOUNDED MORE CONVINCING...? WAS IT SHARON'S...? (A cartoon illustration of a man and a woman in a room, with the man looking thoughtful and the woman looking concerned.)

Pan people

WHEN Morris Mitchener was apparently traumatised and exhibited signs of fear at the West Yorkshire Playhouse (Peter Pan producers sued over the boy who wouldn't look up, March 4) wouldn't it have been a good idea to take the child out of the production? Maybe his parents could have attempted to return after a break, but if as they say, the theatre was negligent and hadn't warned them that small children may find the production frightening, they could have demanded their money back. Susan Paylor, 14 Ambleside Road, Lancaster LA1 3HT.

WE have read in the Guardian about Peter Pan and the people who want to sue the West Yorkshire Playhouse and we think it is ridiculous. We thought it was excellent. We think it was not very scary but it had good effects. Peter Sims, 9, Ruth Sims, 3, Naples Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD8 9DX.

IN Gerald, page 100, Daphne Du Maurier writes of her father's performance: "When Hook first paced the quarter-deck in the year of 1904, children were carried screaming from the stalls." Some things never change. Peter Roberts, Rosemary Norton, Norton & Roberts Booksearch, 18 Mildmay Grove, London N1 4RL.

Labour in a class of its own

PROFESSOR Bob Moon (Education, March 5) is right about New Labour and education, but it's worse, much worse, than that. The sociologists of education in America and Britain laboured mightily in the 1960s and 1970s to prove, over and over again, that little Johnny in the council house with no books does not do as well at school as little Johnny whose father and mother have several degrees between them, a house full of books, and the salaries to pay for nursery school, musical tuition, foreign holidays etc, etc.

Yes, the Headstart teams and Midwinter and Bernstein et al did what sociologists are supposed to do: they proved the obvious. The chief determinant of educational performance is parental background and income — class, in the more robust discourse of a bygone era. But there is the problem: the C word. New Labour doesn't like the C word; abhors it. The C word reeks of the poor, the losers, with whom New Labour does not want to be associated. New Labour is a classless class — inner city deprivation. New Labour can't accept the view that being poor is the problem because New Labour has become "sensible" about economics; about poverty and inequality it can thus do nothing.

So it has to find something else; and there's not a lot of choice, really, is there? If not the home, then it's the school. Which means the teachers, or trendy teaching methods, or comprehensives. New Labour

Old soldiers, black and white and red with indignation

I AM sure that the report by the Commission for Racial Equality on racial abuse and discrimination in the British Army (32, March 5) has not come too soon for black soldiers and white soldiers married to black women.

When I enlisted as an army apprentice in 1955 there were Burmese and West African young soldiers at the Army Apprentice School, Chesham, who for three years put up with daily racial abuse. In spite of the racist ethos that prevailed there were, however, a few white soldiers who would give support to their black comrades.

In 1962 I married a Jamaican and served in the Royal Engineers until 1967. Quite frequently I experienced racist comments about my marriage. Albert, the these remarks were made light heartedly in many instances, they demonstrated the racism that was, and no doubt still is, rooted in the minds of some, if not many, soldiers.

If the Ministry of Defence is to make any impact upon racism in the Army, apart from such measures as changes to the disciplinary code, it will need to undertake a massive re-education programme to change the perception that white soldiers have towards their black comrades-in-arms. David F Sparks, London E6 3EZ.

It isn't necessary to have been in the Army to believe that there are no bad troops — only bad officers. Where were the officers in the cases which you have rightly described as the "Army roll-call of shame"? Either they knew what was going on, and did nothing, or they didn't know. What level of professionalism was that? Nor does one have to be an Imperial historian to appreciate the frequently decisive contribution of troops from ethnic minorities to the many past successes of British arms on the battlefield.

The situation you have described is a national outrage — all the more so now that the technical professionalism of the British Army is widely appreciated in Europe. Bill Clarence, Roum A'Avouon, 0170 Crozet, France.

As a white British soldier I served as a non-commissioned officer with the West African Forces in the Far East during the second world war. It was a punishable offence to use any form of derogatory name for the soldiers who were always referred to as West African troops. What has gone wrong with the British Army of today? A B Moore, 83 Tile Kiln Lane, Berley, Kent DA5 2BD.

The future is not all grey

CONGRATULATIONS on having the courage to suggest the unthinkable — that the UK may actually need immigrants in future decades because of the ageing of the existing population (The Sunday Express, 25 March 6). Recognition of this possibility is by no means unfamiliar elsewhere in Europe.

There are, in fact, some good reasons why we should not rely on immigration to redress the age imbalance in the population, not least that immigrants also get older and need pensions and health care. However, there are other, strong arguments for reconsidering our hostility to overseas labour: their entrepreneurial skills (largely denied to the UK by immigration rules which exclude all but the most wealthy) and continuing skill shortages in the public and private sector, which have ensured that the majority of work permits issued for overseas employees has risen over the last decade despite the level of unemployment.

Yet almost 20 per cent of applications from employers are turned down, denying them access to the overseas workers they want.

In the course of our research, employers' representatives told us that "Restrictions via the work permit scheme on recruitment and training strategies may result in multi-nationals moving their HQ operations to countries where work permit restrictions are considerably less onerous."

The lesson of history is that immigrants and refugees can bring significant benefits, economic and cultural. While public debate on this issue is yet again dominated by proposed legislation to impose ever tighter restrictions, it is a lesson that appears to have been lost. Sarah Spencer, Director, Human Rights Programme, Institute for Public Policy Research, 39-33 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7RA.

A Country Diary

NORTHUMBERLAND: When the local pack of foxhounds hunt around Harnham, the farmer stands on the medieval tower of his farmstead to direct the huntsman. A historian tells me that he is simply doing what his ancestors must have done. She showed me photographs and drawings of towers in France. "Landowners from these border counties travelled on the continent," she said. "French chateaux in medieval times watched hunting from their residences and needed a high building. The idea was copied over here." Certainly the region of Gascony, in which Englishmen spent much time in the 14th Century, abounds with similar thick-walled tower houses with identical bartizans to ours. The historian showed me how she dates the peles; transoms are horizontal crossbars on the windows, the lower the transoms, the older the tower. Stone walls, or dykes, as the locals call them here, stretch for miles in this county of castles, bastles and pele towers. Records at Capheaton

Hall show the seven-foot high drystone wall which stands on the north boundary of the old park has stood for over 300 years. A drystone wall is built without cement but there is now a tendency to wall with cement bands like the Romans did. The coping stone is the top stone which protects the wall. Coping stones are laid on a layer of turf which takes root and grows and makes the top of the wall more secure.

It will soon be time for roads to breed. We have been asked by Northumberland Wildlife Trust to beware the road in the road and to report sightings of crossing points so that signs can be erected to protect them. A prime toad breeding area in a marshy place near the golf course at Alnmouth has been restored this winter. Brambles and rank undergrowth has been cleared, new ponds and clear wetland constructed. But amphibians are in decline. The so-called common frog can no longer be described as common in the North-east. VERONICA HEATH

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number, even in e-mailed letters. We may edit them; shorter ones are more likely to appear.

Diary
Matthew Norman

It is high time to set the record straight about my friend Jonathan Dimbleby and his wife Bel Mooney. Malignant tongues say that, since the telly show on Charles, the two of them, flattered by the whiff of royal friendship — have become self-appointed apologists for the Prince, Stuff and nonsense. Take the case of Jack Critchlow, who — a few days after having a letter critical of Charles published in the Guardian — received a reply from Bel to what she termed his "rather silly and pointless little letter": in it, she wittily affected to defend Charles's position as heir. Meanwhile, only yesterday, Jonathan had a gloriously ironic piece published in the Sun. The headline speaks for itself: "Charles, too, comforts the sick and dying... in private and without publicity. Of course he doesn't show up by Monday, a search party will be sent to the Prince's colon."

THE ITV night-time dating show — next to which *Handbags* seems like *Strindberg* in the Swedish — broke new ground this week by bringing together gay couples. ITV is to be congratulated, then, for slotting Army recruitment adverts into commercial breaks before and during the show.

TODAY is International Women's Day — and how better to mark it than with a piece from my erstwhile colleague Germaine Greer? It comes from an interview with Duncan Fallowell, published in his book, *30th Century Characters*. I reproduce it without either permission from the publisher (Vintage) or comment. "I have a little farm in Tuscany — I will retire there — and my housekeeper Lisa can't read or write, but she's one of my best friends. She can't even tell the time. But once when I was eating a basil plant which had died on me, she said: 'Basilico e geloso, mori subito'. Basil is jealous, it dies at once. And I thought — aw shit, I can't teach this woman anything." Magnificent.

LITIGATION — possibly under the tort of "passing off" — may soon be brought by *Diary* forecaster Steptoe, the West Highland terrier regarded as the western world's leading canine soothsayer. (By the way, at New Year, when they were no-hopers, he tipped Liverpool for the Premiership and look at them now). Something described as "a small white dog", and calling itself *Piekie Mutt*, has been seen picking Lottery numbers on a regional news show — something Steptoe pioneered last summer. Meanwhile, *Do* World magazine employs a terrier as its resident astrologer. His name is Jack Ruseel Grant. Steptoe is currently enjoying his retirement from his media career, but may well make another of his positively last appearances shortly, to choose a replacement for Gentleman Charlie Wilson.

AFTER two weeks of ceaseless detective work, we can today expose the mystery journalist denounced by my friend Peter Bottomley, the well meaning but oblique MP for Eatham. Having eliminated so many suspects (Sir John Junor among them), the agony ends today for all but "the journalist" himself. It is... me. You will appreciate that this has come as a tremendous shock, but before reporting my news to the Press Complaints Commission, I would like to make a short statement: I wish to express my regret for any distress caused. I have let my editor down. I've let my readers down. And I've let my loyal army of readers down. Most of all, however, I've let myself down.

Do you remember Peter Hitchens? The *Diary* looking for mementoes of his career with the Socialist Worker's Party in the 1970s, before he joined the *Daily Express*. If you can help, please contact the *Diary*, in confidence, at the usual number.



Why the Vision Thing is merely a mirage

Commentary
Peter Preston

WE HUNT the Big idea as we hunt the Snark. We quest for the Vision Thing and become a lukewarm puddle of lamentation when there is nothing like the Thing on offer. First, for the moment, to sack all that stuff away. It isn't happening — and, whilst we lust after some roseate future, the world of the here and now just keeps plugging on regardless.

Take one text from the last four weeks. Effectively, the American primary season was always going to be over in that short, cruel span. You looked at a feeble array of Republican candidates. You looked at their funds and a drastically changed primary schedule. You could predict (in this slot four weeks ago) an inchoate, thrashing series of contests from which someone — probably old Bob Dole — would

emerge victorious but direly diminished. And so it came to pass. Dole, barring earthquake or fever, will be anointed the challenger to Clinton in San Diego come August. But this week the polls predict his defeat in California's Orange County — which is the rough British equivalent of New Labour sweeping Virginia Water. The legions of American pundits are therefore, in the memorial way of punditry, busy speculating how Dole can bind together the gaping wounds of the primary circuit, how he can blend a little trade protectionism, how racism and non-racism, abortion and no abortion, hate and love, can be tacked into a programme of unity which Steve Forbes and Pat Buchanan can salute. It is a doomed enterprise. Worse, it is a deluded enterprise based on a lousy hypothesis: the belief that new ideas are (a) available and (b) matter. Since the year turned, by way of illustration, the great American news magazines have, with due phrasing, run similarly great cover stories on Forbes the Tax-Reforming Phenomenon and Buchanan the Malign Exponent of Middle Class Discontent. (Due phrasing means they hailed Forbes

on one of his fleeting poll upswings and dumped him for a fortnight later when Buchanan's New Hampshire triumph made him the hero of the millisecond). Reams of detailed analysis and speculation therefore followed. All of it assumes that an idea, or a series of ideas, produced an identifiable electoral result and must thus be dissected and embraced with profound reverence. That is roughly as sensible as writing about the second year (1996-99) programme of Chris Patten's government because John Major said something on the way to the loo at Hong Kong airport. In fact, and leaving Steve Forbes' billionaire mountain of TV cash to one side, Buchanan drew slightly fewer votes in New Hampshire than he did at the same 1992 event. He won because the rest of the class '96 did even worse on an even more apocalyptic, even more disconcertingly confused turn-out of activists. Give the once and continuing Buchanan message the dignity of seeming seriousness and it was always going to shrivel back to its ordinary rank status — in Georgia, to name but one. In sum: ideas, big or small, may currently be a necessary part of the marketing mes-

sage. They may be a help in defining images. But they are not anything much to do with what an aspiring politician does if elected. (Call William Jefferson Clinton). And they are wisps of candle-floss floating on the surface of contests which are really decided by broader perceptions of where candidates are coming or going to — the perceptions of a voting force which relentlessly declines to be as cud-chewing stupid as high-priced spin consultants would wish. This may not be a convenient or welcome message. It is not what we automatically want or wish to contemplate. But it seems, as matters rest, the only reasonable way of reading the tide of elections washing the world. Did Paul Keating in Canberra get the kangaroo push because of his

Voters relentlessly decline to be as cud-chewing stupid as high-priced spin consultants would wish

outrageous views on the sanctity of the monarchy or because of the majesty of Howard's alternative vision? Neither: the Oz voter was just bored and fed up. In a hot part of Europe which ought to matter to us a great deal more, will Jorge Pujol's Catalan Nationalists eventually row to the rescue of Mr Aznar's shakily triumphant Spanish conservative government? The ideas and the rhetoric of the two parties says No. The eventual reality is that Pujol's big

money Catalan industrial backers will soon be banging at his door telling him to shape up, because the peseta is falling out of the sky. Brute realities, not grandiose ideas. On the way home from Barcelona to Britain, pause with me briefly in Paris to read yesterday afternoon's opinion polls. We left Mr Chirac and Mr Juppe eight weeks ago in the alleged throes of terminal crisis inexorably imposed by their attachment to the idea of economic and Monetary Union. Brothers, there, Chirac isn't wildly popular, but his "good job" ratings are situated in Tony Blair territory; and Juppe is more popular than Prince Charles. Beware here, as everywhere else, the wilder shores of ideological obsession. Our politicians may, one White Paper away, be poised again for further immersion in the cauldron marked Maastricht 2. Nobody else need or will be much interested. The ferment of Scott comes and goes — and Labour's lead shrinks on the ICM index.

I always thought that Mrs Thatcher's Big Idea was in truth only the small and silted-eyed notion of turning a sort of working class (Labour) voters into younger, sort-of-middle-class (Conservative) voters as the means to hand provided. At possibly unrecognised root, Tony Blair operates to the same script, but in directional reverse: issues for the issues classes, broad postures for the huge majority of the rest. Does that sound cynical? Want to argue? Don't call me, call Pat Buchanan. You can probably reach him at some radio station in the Bronx this weekend. Ring directory enquiries and ask for Yesterday's Man.

Me, Melvyn and the centre-left



Bel Littlejohn

HAVE radio prog? No question about it. Start the Week with Melvyn Bragg. Or Start the Week with Melvyn and Bel as it is beginning to be known in media circles. Or Start the Week with Bel and Melvyn as I'm told it is now officially called by my good friend John Burt. I've been a regular on the show for some years now, ever since I was invited on in early 1992 to discuss the publication of my award-winning environmental children's classic *A Time To Dance With Fluffy The Dolphin*. Loosely based on Melvyn's own book with a similar title, it movingly describes the passionate but doomed relationship between a middle-aged schoolmaster in the Lake District and the much younger, flightier and damper Fluffy the Dolphin. Me and Melvyn clicked instantly. While debating the issues of the day with our other guests — a leading centre-left theologian, an up-and-coming centre-left cheesemaker, an outstanding centre-left dress designer and an outspoken centre-left jeweller — we realised we shared a great many radical views of our society, loosely based around what one might term for the sake of convenience the centre-left.

only last Monday that I raised another issue of great urgency. Around the table we had a centre-left comedian, a centre-left scientist, a centre-left philatelist and a centre-left circus acrobat. After the initial pleasantries, the list of guests' books published this week was read out. Then came the familiar sound of that reassuring catchphrase "... and we are also joined by Bel Littlejohn of the Guardian ..." before we got round to thrashing out exactly what's wrong with our society today. Basically, we were all agreed that whatever is wrong can be laid firmly at the feet of the Establishment, that small, tightly-disciplined, secret elite of chairmen, Garrick members, millionaires, bosses, media moguls and men in suits who have been secretly running our lives since way back when.

Take it from me, any serious debate in this country today concerning politics, philosophy, aesthetics, history and the future role of Britain in an increasingly hi-tech international community must eventually come to rest on the split-up between Charles and Di. Who's to blame? On Monday's prog, Melvyn got down to brass tacks. "I thought Robert Harris wrote a very intelligent piece yesterday about the Establishment, and the Large Bottoms who secretly run our society," he said. "And so I'd like to talk, if I may, about the divorce of the Prince and Princess of Wales."

OUR talk then turned to the whole nature of the Establishment. Melvyn confirmed that the Conservative Party was in fact led by fat-bottomed public-school aristos. "I hope listeners will forgive me for once again agreeing with my assistant," I said. "But Melvyn's got a point. Look who you've got at the top of the present discredited Tory Cabinet for instance, Major, Hogg, Baker, Ridsdale, Clarke. All of them fat-bottomed public school aristos. It's an open-and-shut case."

"And" I went on, "you don't have to tell me they're probably all members of something called the Conservative Club, and of course they're millionaires from cashing in their Thatcherite share options, and they're all listed in Who's Who as chairmen of this, that and the other. So let's talk about Princess Diana, the media, and they're all invited to the same parties, where they mix with the rich and the famous and..."

At this point, Melvyn began to shift his bottom in his chair. "Let's move on to a new book by Sister Wendy," he chipped in. "But, Melvyn," I said, "Sister Wendy's not in the studio this morning, and we don't even have her book." "So let's talk about Princess Diana," said Melvyn. "Or what about a Bill of Rights? Establishment this, Establishment that. For God's sake, let's broaden it out a bit, Bel."

Chris Patten's reign in Hong Kong is nearing its end. What then for the man suddenly being touted as Major's successor? He talks to Alex Brummer

Still the governor

AS the person entrusted with the sensitive task of steering Hong Kong through the 16 months until the Chinese takeover of Britain's last great colony Chris Patten is not suddenly about to pack his bags and parachute back home. He remains here until the 30th of June 1997, he declares definitively, adding "I am not going to fight a seat at the next general election."

Such firmness is clearly essential for Britain's last Governor who is determined to give no comfort to the anti-Patten factions in the colony's business community, or those who would know to the mainland Chinese. They would welcome the departure of the Governor who is perceived by democrats in Hong Kong as having done more, at some personal cost, to open up the political debate there than all of his august predecessors.

Nevertheless, Patten plainly is savouring the aftermath of the prime ministerial call in Hong Kong which has propelled him back to the centre of British political debate. John Major, having been asked whether he thought Patten could be a potential successor to the Tory leadership, gave what Patten describes as "a loyal and sympathetic answer." However, the Governor says he does not believe that it is possible to "talk seriously about the political prospects of somebody who is out of the British political scene, some distance from any question of the leadership of the Conservative Party." Reflecting on the point, as he leans back into the armchair in his light and airy study at Government House, he recalls that if you look back over the leadership of the Tories since Eden in 1955 you find that with "most recent changes, the person who became leader emerged only at the last minute."

Having pronounced that there is no precedent for such a thing Patten cannot but delight in the alarm being felt by some in the Tory Party, which the current newspaper speculation must be provoking. "There will be one or two people on the right of the Conservative Party who will doubtless be choking on their cornflakes," he wryly notes. "But I don't think they have need for immediate apology." Although there is, to use Patten's own words, no immediate intention to return to the UK political fray that does not mean that he has had no offers, or that his experience in managing the complex economy of an Asian tiger nation, has not shifted and clarified his political philosophy.

He dismisses the widely floated notion that there is some safe seat in Kensington & Chelsea or elsewhere being nurtured ahead of his return to Britain. But there have been no offers of office. "I have received approaches from Conservative associations," he confirms. But they have received what he describes as "courteous but firm replies." He adds, in case there is any confusion on the point, "There are no seats



being kept warm." In case that slams the door a little too firmly, he notes there is a Conservative Party in which he remains interested, even in his present apolitical state, "in an academic sort of way." This requires Patten to have a viewpoint about "the development of Europe; about the relationship between public spending and tax; and about inputs in the economy."

There will be one or two people on the Conservative right who will be choking on their cornflakes'

— research, capital investment and infrastructure. Even though he has a clarity of view on all of these issues, which clearly has been burnished by the Asian-Pacific experience, this does not signal that he is going to stop talking about democracy in Hong Kong and the Chinese disdain for press freedom, and start on what he calls the "chicken and peas" circuit. Indeed, Patten is rather proud of the fact that it is his own extraordinarily close relationship with the Prime

Minister ("we enjoy each other's company, I think he is terrific") which helped to move the UK political system on the Hong Kong passport and visa issues, and took Major further than he has gone before in public defence of Hong Kong's elected Legislative Council, LegCo.

So what kind of Conservative is the new Patten? During our talk he steadfastly resisted the notion that in his enthusiasm for the excitement of the Asian growth model he had somehow given up on the principles of German Christian Democrats and what he describes as a socially responsible market economy. "But I am something more domesticated than a German Christian Democrat. I am a Tory and not particularly ideological," he says. "I have learned, therefore, to learn from life as I pass along this story road. It would be mind-bogglingly stupid of me to spend a few years of my life in the middle of Asia and not actually have any mark left on me." He insists, though, that he has not become "starry eyed about Asia" despite being enthusiastic about the region. He believes it is not necessary for Europe to "give up its own values" to be able to compete with Asia. There is, however, much

part of the action without selling out all it believes in. He says he shares the view of Blair and John Major that "Britain is Asia's way into Europe" partly through its Commonwealth connections. But, as importantly, he thinks that Europe can learn from the Asia model. "Can I, an intelligent man, sit here and look at the balance between tax and spending in Asia and tax and spending in Europe and not believe in some lessons for Europe? Particularly, can I believe that there is no connection between sluggish growth in Europe, high levels of unemployment in Europe and public spending and tax? I am not in favour of a slash and burn approach to public spending. I do believe that if we have to reduce the role of the state in the economy in the medium and long-term. "We delude ourselves whether we are German, Italian, Spanish or French if we believe we can go on with a 1940s or 50s attitude to public spending without any consequences for economic growth in the next century." Patten insists, however, that this does not conflict with the idea of one-nation Toryism. He was attracted to the Disraeli notion of duty, obligation and social responsibility were all important. "But I no more believe that you have to demonstrate your Euro-enthusiasm by signing up to a calendar for the single currency than I believe that you have to demonstrate your care and compassion by the proportion of GDP taken by the state."

Here the Governor of Hong Kong is able to draw upon local experience. In its budget, presented to the LegCo this week, he was able to offer his people compassion, in the shape of sharp spending increases on the elderly, tax cuts in the shape of a 43 per cent reduction for middle-income families, and still bring public spending in at 18 per cent of total wealth, producing a small budget surplus for the year 1996-97. This outcome of low spending and low taxes can be contrasted with John Major's goal of bringing total public spending down to 40 per cent of GDP, more than twice the figure in Hong Kong in a bad year. The Patten view is that it is not just spending which needs cutting but tax too: "I do believe that levels of tax have an effect on people's attitudes to work and people's willingness to take risk; I do believe that one of the most attractive things about Hong Kong is the willingness of people to have a crack at things themselves, the enthusiasm and the nerve."

'I have received approaches from Conservatives but there are no seats being kept warm'

Thus what had begun as a talk with the Governor about the prospects for Hong Kong's political and economic future — which to many in the colony look increasingly bleak as the handover approaches — had effectively become a clear statement of the political creed which he will bring back to London when Britain retreats. Chris Patten may not have been invited to claim to be the post-Major Tory leadership, but he certainly left the impression that he has a great deal to offer.

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10 OBITUARIES

The Rt Rev Stanley Booth-Clibborn

People's friend

REFLECTION on the life and ministry of Stanley Booth-Clibborn, lately Bishop of Manchester, who has died aged 71, serves to underline the unfairness of pinning labels on prominent church leaders...



Christian soldier... Booth-Clibborn, a feeling for the poor, the oppressed, the outcast

abilities, however. The British Council of Churches, Lincoln Theological College and Christian Aid (Anne was later to chair its board) all made use of his expertise...

James Sutherland

Critic next to greatness

JAMES SUTHERLAND who has died aged 95, began his inaugural lecture as Lord Northcliffe Professor at UCL, College, London, by observing that there were things more significant than great literature but criticism was not one of them...



Simon Cadell... with Patricia Hodge in Noel and Gerlie

Simon Cadell

Hi-de-Hi to high class

SIMON CADELL, who has died of cancer at the age of 45, was a dedicated actor who often disguised his serious nature behind an off-stage languid manner...

Jack Sutherland

JACK SUTHERLAND, who has died aged 79, was the Morning Star's theatre critic. He was also an interviewer of Hugh MacDiarmid, Sean O'Casey and Yevgeny Yevtushenko...

secret wartime Enigma code-breaking operation. Born in one of Aberdeen's bleak grey granite tenements while his father was fighting in the first world war...

war, Jack was drafted into the Royal Corps of Signals and sent to work on Enigma. After the Normandy landings and the advance into Belgium he was the first British communist in Brussels and thus widely feted when he walked into the offices of Drapeau Rouge...

Back in post-war Britain he gravitated to London's East End and married Doeren Hoyland, a young widow with two sons. A daughter, Gene, at Drury Lane, he achieved his great ambition when he joined the Morning Star and eventually became its theatre critic...

literature, had finally come into his own. We shall remember him as a great teacher, stimulating and respectful of others at all times.

Jackdaw



Open the box

I CHANCED upon some people in the street examining the entrails of some disposed computers and a fax machine. I like them, can be transfixed by the intricate beauty of these printed circuit boards...

would have the same "value". The answer was no, the hand done image would be inherently superior. Sleep T leucist examines the use of computers in art for the quarterly art and technology newspaper, Mute.

Get out, now!

- SLIP OUT the back, Jack.
Make a new plan, Stan.
You don't need to be coy, Roy.
Hop on the bus, Gus.
Drop off the key, Lee.
Hop on your cycle, Michael.
Flag down a cabbie, Abby.
Ask to be free more, Seymour.
Mention your spouse, Klaus.
Tell her you're gay, Ray.
Tell her you're straight, Kate.
Give the usual spiel, Neil.
Kick him in the spleen, Nadine.
Give two week's notice, Otis.
Be open and honest to her about how, although you love her, you think you need some

time apart to grow and find out how you really feel. Shaquille. Chris Harris, at the enterprising Mute magazine, comments on Paul Simon's song, Fifty Ways To Love Your Lover.

Threadbare

THE LAST thing a junior barrister wants is a new wig. "The darker and older looking the better," says Jonathan Hill, sales consultant in the legal department clothing at Thresher and Glenny. Unlike the rest of a barrister's apparel, the state of the wig is not judged by how aged it appears to be...

they've been around," he says. Barristers will go to great lengths to make their wigs look fashionably old. There are a number of tried and tested ways to age one, including stamping on it, kicking it in the dirt, giving it to kids, letting the dog at it, or shaking it in a Hoover bag.

Sitting pretty

Designer: Hugh Brown, John Heiden. Bauhaus Barbie... La

Training: Brown is currently writing a coffee-table book about the chainsaw in popular culture. Heiden co-owns the graphic-design firm SMOG. Both collect bizarre toys. Inspiration: "It's about gender and sexual equality and reversal. Not that it's right for a woman to view a man in that light, but with the '90s we figure we're going to see a lot more of it," says Heiden.

Los Angeles

Can Alicia Silverstone Save Sony? ... Designer: Bob Helfrich. Training: Licensed architect. Philosophy: "Barbie is the opposite of what is good for the world. All she does is consume. This chair is an armature on which Barbie can build a new, understated life."

Birthdays

- Gyles Brandreth, broadcaster, comic, Conservative MP, 48; Sir Julian Bullard, former diplomat, 68; Sir Anthony Caro, sculptor, 72; Cyd Charisse, dancer, 76; Sir James Connry, former High Court judge, 75; Phil Edwards, cricketer, 45; Michael Grade, chief executive, Channel 4, 53; Douglas Hard, MP, former Foreign Secretary, 66; Dick Hyman, jazz pianist, 65; Michael Inchald, designer, 76; Alan Jenner, ballerina, 52; Gary Numan, rock musician, 38; Lynn Redgrave, actress, 53; Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi, 48; Lynn Seymour, ballerina, 57; Prof Norman Stone, historian, 55; Robert Tear, operatic tenor, 57; Claire Trevor, actress, 87; John Ward, Conservative MP, 71; David Wilkie, Olympic swimmer, 42.

Death Notices

BOOTH-CLIBBORN, in the Royal Interment, Edinburgh, on March 19 1996. Stanley Booth-Clibborn, former Bishop of Manchester. Beloved husband and father of three. Burial at 10.30am, the West Chapel, Glasgow Crematorium, Hoop Lane, N.W.1 at 11.45. Friends welcome.

Birthdays

STANFIELD, Mrs. Milton Ann, 65. 40. Lady Harry. Birthday and funeral, 10.30am, the West Chapel, Glasgow Crematorium, Hoop Lane, N.W.1 at 11.45. Friends welcome.

Helrich's Barbie chair can be collapsed for bike trips

Designer: Rogerio Cavalheiro. Training: Architectural designer. Philosophy: "Barbie was ahead of her time. She was the first woman on the moon, a mother in 1963, a woman in a power business suit in 1968 and Olympic gold medalist in a variety of different sports. She's a multi-faceted, multi-talented and multi-cultural. There's a Barbie for every nationality. She seems to be everything the '90s is about. Cavalheiro's Barbie chair features internet access. From a selection of design proposals for a competition to create the perfect chair for Barbie. Published in Los Angeles magazine. Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Dan Glaister



Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Wessex offers lower bills for neighbours

WESSEX Water yesterday promised to cut the water bills of South West Water's 1.5 million customers if its proposed £850 million plus bid for its neighbouring utility succeeds, writes Nicholas Bannister and Geoffrey Gibbs.

But the planned bid, which will have to be approved by both the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and trade and industry secretary Ian Lang, was coolly received by the SWW board chaired by Keith Court. It told shareholders that Wessex had not yet made a formal offer and they should take no action.

SWW customers have the highest water and sewage charges in the country partly because the company has invested heavily to resolve a range of problems including water pollution along its huge coastline, which takes in many of the country's best known bathing beaches.

Wessex, headed by Nicholas Hood (right), is prepared to offer "a commercially justifiable premium" to SWW's closing price on Wednesday of 508p. However, the shares soared to 606p yesterday in anticipation of a counterbid.

PHOTOGRAPH: GRAHAM TURNER



Hong Kong Notebook

Democracy has hefty price tag



Alex Brummer

MANY in Hong Kong's business community believe that the best way of ensuring a smooth transition to Chinese rule is to do what the Chinese want.

This view has encouraged many tycoons to dissociate themselves from Governor Chris Patten's policy of encouraging a measure of genuine democracy in the colony, even if this causes problems in Beijing. Hong Kong, in the Patten view, is a testimony to the benefits of a free and open press, unfettered financial markets and open borders to trade.

Although Singapore does not offer the same freedoms, there are opinion leaders here who say it could challenge Hong Kong's leadership. The costs for international financial institutions of doing business from Hong Kong has become prohibitive as a result of inflated property prices and rising labour costs.

There is some concern that when China does take over there may be a new cost of corruption. No deal can be present be done in Shanghai or Shenzhen without some greasing of palms. That may not damage Hong Kong's role as the international financial centre for China, but it could make it less attractive over the longer haul for the international financial institutions which have large-scale operations in the territory.

There are already indications that some fund management operations have moved to Singapore, attracted by Lee Kuan Yew's compulsory savings schemes, which have been seen as a model for Europe as well as this region. Although Hong Kong can produce independent surveys showing that it remains cost competitive with Singapore, that is not the perception among business leaders.

There is a view that the colony should be doing more to attract inward investors by offering subsidies or tax breaks — something that is alien to the non-interventionist character of the colony.

The budget seeks to maintain Hong Kong's edge with a large increase in funding for improving services, economy skills, telecommunications and the skills base of the population, including the ability to speak English. This should help, but Hong Kong may also be assisted by its potential rival, Singapore — it is said to have had enough of foreign investors following the antics of Nick Leeson on the futures markets.

Handle with care
BRITAIN, of course, has as much reason as anyone to fear a loss of confidence in Hong Kong once the flag comes down. Indeed, in preparation for Chris Patten's evacuation of Government House, Britain is building a huge new consulate in the shadow of the Conrad hotel (where John Major's party stayed) to take care of UK affairs, from passport questions to monitoring of the Joint Declaration and Basic Law, under which Beijing will govern.

Although Britain is no longer Hong Kong's biggest investor, its status is considerable. Figures, collated by Britain's trade commission suggest that UK investment in the colony is still worth £70 billion, down from £80 billion in 1983 as a result of a decline in stock market values and the migration of Jardines from Hong Kong to London and Singapore. In addition there are some £10 billion of UK pension fund assets in Hong Kong as well as around £500 million in banking and insurance holdings.

But the main significance of Hong Kong to the UK is as an export location. Some £200 million worth of goods go to Hong Kong each year, other £845 million worth passed through last year on the way to China. The commercial weight of this relationship is among the reasons why British political leaders have been so wary when dealing with Beijing and will, despite John Major's brave words here, continue to do so.

Club and carrot
MANY business people in Hong Kong believe that the ultimate status symbol is membership of the China Club, the Shanghai art deco-style edifice owned by entrepreneur David Tang which is the territory's equivalent of the Savoy Grill.

Compared, however, with the Better Hong Kong Foundation, a business group membership of which costs \$400,000, the China Club (which occupies the old Bank of China building) is for paupers.

Among the members of the BRKF are billionaires such as Li Ka Shing of Ash exports group Whampoa, which is shortly to cash on Orange, and Stanley Ho, whose fortune has been built on a Macao casino empire. The club, run by former advertising executive Leonie K. Ho, hopes to counter any negative image of Hong Kong in the build-up to withdrawal.

The foundation is soon to take its roadshow to the United States, to convince investors that post-1997 Hong Kong will still be a great place in which to invest and do business.

The group rejects suggestions that it exists to counter any adverse impact which Mr Patten's reform programme and the complaints of democrats, like Martin Lee and Emily Lau, may have on the People's Republic. Nonetheless, thus far the foundation has spent most of its time trying to get the mainland Chinese, but there is no guarantee that this strategy will work.

News in brief
Cable operator calls up £1 bn
Telewest, Britain's largest cable operator, yesterday revealed that it needed a further £1 billion to complete its networks and develop new services including probably the fastest internet link yet for residential customers. Chairman Alan Michels said the group had secured bank commitments for £1.2 billion, though no final decision had been made on whether to use this type of financing.

Ladbroke hit hard
Betting shops to hotels group Ladbroke has been hit hard by competition from the National Lottery and the cancellation of horse race meetings because of bad weather, with 40.5 per cent being wiped off profits of the betting businesses. Despite an 18.5 per cent increase in the group's biggest business, the Hilton International hotel

Rolls profits take off
Aero-engine maker Rolls-Royce, which saw profits rise 73 per cent last year, to £175 million on sales 13 per cent higher at £3.59 billion, said further improvements lay ahead as cost-cutting and growing airline profitability fed through to its profit margins. Shares rose 4p to close at 215p.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1,840	France 7,500	Italy 2,340	Singapore 2,12
Austria 15,30	Germany 2,200	Malta 0,5425	South Africa 5,73
Belgium 45,00	Greece 368,00	Netherlands 2,4750	Spain 185,00
Canada 2,03	Hong Kong 11,80	New Zealand 2,22	Sweden 10,31
Cyprus 0,70	India 52,10	Norway 8,81	Switzerland 1,7800
Denmark 8,51	Ireland 0,9600	Portugal 228,00	Turkey 88,181
Finland 6,8800	Ireland 4,70	Saudi Arabia 5,68	USA 1,4800

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Swiss merger puts Zeneca in bid frame

Mark Milner and Sarah Whitebloom

NEWS of a £40 billion Swiss pharmaceuticals merger sparked speculation of a fresh shake-up in the industry, worldwide, with Britain's Zeneca in the bid spotlight.

The announcement of the link-up between Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz to form the world's second-largest drugs company, to be called Novartis, sent Swiss pharmaceutical shares soaring.

In London, Zeneca shares rose 96p to £13.77, while in Frankfurt Germany's three big chemicals groups, BASF, Bayer and Hoechst, which all have strong pharmaceutical operations, rose sharply.

Despite a string of mergers in recent years, including Glaxo's \$9.1 billion acquisition of Wellcome and Rhône-Poulenc's hostile takeover of Fisons, the pharmaceutical market remains fragmented. Yesterday's merger will put the new company in second place in terms of market share, with 44 per cent behind Glaxo-Wellcome's share of around 53 per cent.

It will also mean the loss of some 13,000 jobs — about 10 per cent of the combined Ciba/Sandoz workforce. The two groups reckon the merger will produce savings of £1 billion over the next three years.

The recent wave of mergers has fostered the belief of many observers that further consolidation is imminent. "If the company wants to be a global player it has to have a certain size and scale," said Christiane Dienhart, an analyst at Bayerische Wertinvestbank.

Brokers have long earmarked Zeneca as an attractive target. Another Swiss group, Roche, has been tipped as a likely candidate for a tie-up with the UK group, while some suggest that Bayer and Pfizer from the US may be looking for a strategic move.

Yesterday, Zeneca reacted coolly to the speculation. David Barnes, chief executive of the former ICI division, insisted that "size is not everything in the pharmaceuticals business", maintaining that there was plenty of room in the drugs market for "players of all sizes".

Mr Barnes said: "Our policy is to drive the business as hard and as fast as we know how. It is not a strategic imperative for us to do something just for the sake of doing something... It is not like the aerospace industry, where there is benefit from size. There is no evidence that research-and-development productivity increases with size... Quite the opposite."

Mr Barnes pointed to a 15 per cent increase in full-year profits before exceptional items to £878 million — although goodwill write-offs took the post-exceptions pre-tax total down from £839 million to £815 million.

Zeneca's pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals businesses had an "excellent year", according to the group, with sales rising beyond £2 billion for the first time.

Its spending on R&D was also well ahead at £548 million, compared with £518 million in 1994. Zeneca's management yesterday emphasised the crucial role that such expenditure has on corporate development. According to John Mayo, Zeneca's finance director, the group would "rather take risk in science than up and playing fast and loose with scientists".

Directors deny cashing in on false market • City 'hopping mad' Vickers draws fire

Lisa Buckingham and Chris Harris

VICKERS, the engineering group, yesterday plunged into controversy as leading shareholders accused company directors of cashing in on a false market in the group's shares.

Top institutional investors were furious to discover that Vickers' chief executive, Sir Colin Chandler, and two other directors had sold share options just before the company's share price crashed after hitting a new high. However, the company has denied allegations of a false market and said the share sales had followed company policy.

Vickers, which owns luxury car maker Rolls-Royce, announced a 87 per cent increase in profits to £75 million at 7.30am accompanied by a neutral trading statement. That encouraged City analysts to revise upwards their expectations for the group's earnings in the current year — a move which usually gives significant impetus to a company's share price.

But at an investment meeting with analysts held at 11.30am, Vickers' executives appeared considerably more downbeat about the group's trading prospects, pointing to a number of one-off factors which had buoyed the 1995 results but would not carry forward into the current year. Problems with the Challenger 2 battle tank also became clearer.

Vickers' shares were 14p up on their opening price when that meeting began. But shortly after it finished, they were 10p lower, reflecting concerns raised at the session.

It emerged shortly afterwards that at 8.45am — nearly three hours before the City

heard more about the trading prospects — three of the company's directors had exercised 266,578 options at 86p and immediately sold most of them into the market at 822p.

Sir Colin netted a profit of £389,280 on his share sale leaving him with just 42,500 shares in the company he heads. His boardroom colleague, commercial director Andrew John, made £108,764 and Roger Head, finance and planning managing director, made £33,000.

During the morning, when the City had been encouraged about the outlook for Vickers and helped by recent takeover speculation, the company's shares had touched a new high of 302p. The stock ended the day 9p down at 279p.

"Institutions are hopping mad," said one leading fund manager. "Some of them are even talking about the possibility of legal action."

One senior analyst commented: "Between an upbeat

trading statement and an effective profits warning at the meeting there was a false market in the shares."

A Vickers spokeswoman denied there was any question of a false market. She said all the shares had been sold through the company's broker. It is understood that the executive share options were exercised and then sold centrally under Vickers' longstanding policy.

The spokeswoman said the results announcement to the Stock Exchange and the analysts' presentation were entirely consistent. "There has been a certain amount of manipulation of the share price by the City, not by the company."

However, another fund manager said that although there appeared not to have been any illegality, the sales reflected badly on the reputation of the company and its boardroom in the City.

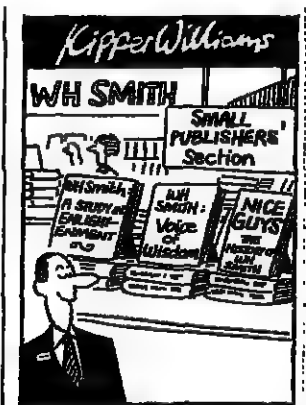
WH Smith calls peace talks with publishers

Lisa Buckingham

WH SMITH, the newsagency, music and bookselling group, has signalled a willingness to climb down from its "get tough" approach to small publishers by calling a meeting with representatives of the sector on Monday.

Gerald Jenkins, the new chairman of the Guild of Independent Publishers (GIP), said he would meet executives from WH Smith to discuss the group's plans to demand far bigger discounts and substantially improved credit terms from small suppliers.

A number of local independent book publishers say the immediate imposition of new terms of trade could drive them out of business. It is understood that several



have taken legal advice on the possibility of referring the issue to the Office of Fair Trading, although none has yet lodged a formal complaint and no industry-wide initiative has been agreed. It ap-

pears the GIP will hold this potential weapon in reserve.

Worries about the tactics of WH Smith, which sells one in every four books, were prominent at the annual conference of GIP, which has more than 300 members, last weekend.

Jo Howard, the company's new head of adult books, attended the conference and is thought to have opened the way for conciliation talks. The company, which has issued two profit warnings in the past year, said yesterday it was holding meetings with the entire publishing industry.

It also denied it was waging a campaign against left-wing magazines by questioning whether it should continue to stock titles such as Tribune and Red Pepper. The company said there merely had been a routine review of what should remain at individual outlets.

RTZ offers Aborigines £30m for land rights

Ian King

AROUND 150 Aboriginal families in Queensland, Australia, have been offered A\$60 million (£30 million) over a 20-year period by RTZ, the world's biggest mining group, the company said yesterday.

The Waanyi Aborigines have been offered the cash for lost land rights while RTZ builds a £550 million zinc mine nearby.

However, the Aborigines want to continue the year-long negotiations, which RTZ said yesterday threatened the mine's future.

The Aborigines were cleared last month by the Australian High Court to appeal against an earlier Federal

Court ruling which rejected their right to native title on the land. Under Australia's Native Title Act, a tribunal will now consider the issues.

Leon Davis, RTZ's deputy chief executive, said the company was prepared to "go back to square one" on the negotiations if necessary, but warned this could mean the mine being scaled down.

He added: "It's very difficult to determine just what the tribunal will decide, but we consider our offer to be a very attractive one — it's the highest offer ever made by a mining company in Australia."

News of the offer came as RTZ unveiled pre-tax profits of £1.8 billion for 1995, up 37 per cent on 1994, the first figures since the company's merger with its Australian as-

sociate, CRA, last year. But higher Australian tax charges, along with problems at RTZ's Kennecott smelter in America and the Escondido mine in Chile — the world's biggest copper mine — brought this down to an adjusted £913 million, less than the City expected, and sent RTZ shares down 18p to 919p.

Meanwhile, Bob Wilson, RTZ's chief executive, refused to rule out the possibility of a bid for Peabody, the American coal-mining firm owned by Hanson, which is currently in the process of demerger itself.

"We are always considering various options, but Peabody is certainly the only part of Hanson we would be interested in," he said. "But it has had its problems."

Partners share a £57m slice of John Lewis trade surplus

Lisa Buckingham

THE 35,000 employees-partners of John Lewis, the department store and supermarkets group, are to receive a bonus worth almost eight weeks' pay following record profits of £150 million in the year to January.

The company, which operates 23 department stores and 112 branches of Waitrose and is Britain's largest employee controlled retailer, distributed a £57 million of that surplus to staff. Chairman Stuart Hampson said yesterday they were the driving force behind the increased profits.

The 28 per cent growth in profit, on sales 9 per cent higher at £2.8 billion, was achieved despite the hot summer hitting department store sales and the fact that Waitrose faces continued strong price competition from rivals such as Sainsbury and Tesco.

Sales in the department stores — which, alone in the high street, offer nearly 500,000 product lines — increased by 7 per cent. Waitrose added 13 per cent providing the third year of strong profits rebound for the company which suffered badly in the early years of the decade.

The latest 28 per cent improvement for the partnership comes on top of a 25 per cent gain last year. Mr Hampson said, however, that the outlook for the current year was uncertain.

Even so, in the first five weeks of trading, department stores are showing 12 per cent growth in sales, while Waitrose's are 14 per cent higher.

12 FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

RICHARD THOMAS and SIMON BEAVIS say islands of socialism float in the colony's sea of capitalism

Myths of Patten's pattern for Britain



HONG Kong is riddled with myths. But the highest myth is that the territory is a laissez-faire society, free from the grubby touch of government hands.

their income on rent. The government builds a new road every 13 minutes. Transport projects like the new airport are plotted against a 50-year planning cycle and the transport system operates under the long shadow of state regulation.

Fung puts it, islands of statism in this sea of capitalism. He says the two approaches complement each other, with state housing a silent partner in Hong Kong's economic success.

ment enthusiasm waning. This week's budget pledged a 16 per cent rise in spending on housing and new building work already accounts for a quarter of all state capital spending.

to China by 2000. Electronic road pricing, tried in the mid-80s and dropped because of privacy worries, is back on the cards.

ally unheard of: there were only nine last year. But Stephen Ip, the labour commissioner, has stopped using the term "deregulated" to describe the market.

recent moves to improve conditions, but say the market is still strongly tilted against workers.

Lee Cheuk Yan, head of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unionists, said "Hong Kong has become a prosperous country, but the benefits are not yet being shared with ordinary workers."



Hong Kong's prosperous image disguises a growing gap between rich and poor, which dwarfs the levels of inequality in Taiwan and Singapore. The lives of the haves and have-nots, described respectively by ANDREW HIGGINS and RICHARD THOMAS, rarely cross

Fine to be flash

PARTY the rich of Hong Kong. The airport, Kai Tak, is too cramped to handle private jets, an indispensable trophy for millionaires elsewhere.

Hong Kong still has its flamboyant party-goers, among them Kai-bong and Brenda Chiu, frequently featured in glossy magazines with their his-and-hers Rolls-Royces, one in pink, the other in gold.



Status symbol... Yachts less than 90ft long embarrass rich. The poor have different problems PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCPHREE

Colony of invisibility

PART of the way through his sentence, Ah Lau pauses. He has to — a Boeing 747 from nearby Kai Tak airport is passing overhead.

to the top, and say today's poor should do the same. The instinct of the poor is one of aspiration, not resignation. They do not feel sorry for themselves.

Mr Chu represents property firms on the Hong Kong legislature and sits on various Beijing-appointed bodies. His other recreations include shark-hunting: "I have a shark gun but I haven't been able to catch anything."

Merchants rejoice at Hong Kong's high-octane spending and immunity to the inverse snobbish fashionable among European intellectuals.

There is no pride in being an intellectual: the pride is to be rich. Things are measured differently here.

Even today, spending money on the poor is the visible face of the poor provokes any reaction. When Oxfam last year released the first in-depth research on poverty, the then financial secretary, Sir Hamish Macleod, made a point of not reading it until at least a week after publication.

Mr Lau says that more needs to be done to help people like himself, who try to work. He has no time for beggars. "They are just lazy." He hopes that after 1997, things will improve.

When we are China again, perhaps they will stop taking all our jobs.

Authentic Tang of China is set to conquer world

Jonathan Corfino DAVID Tang, the millionaire who counts Princess Diana and the Duchess of York among his close friends, is seeking to develop China's first global brand name.

"I thought that if I invented a brand first, it would always be in front of any that follow and it will be able to ride on the much greater recognition of China over the next few years."

In order to make the brand more authentic, Mr Tang intends to open a store in Shanghai and wants to add to the merchandise range which already includes curries such as art deco ashtrays and Red Army watches.

Hopewell digs itself into deep debt hole

Outlook Roger Cowe

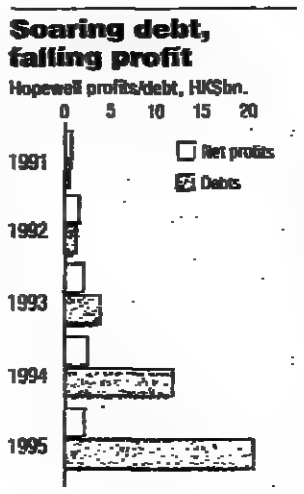
HOPE springs eternal but Hopewell may not. It is the Eurotunnel of Hong Kong, a builder of mega-projects that always seem to cost more, take longer and attract fewer customers than planned.

Such is the fate of big construction projects, as Eurotunnel knows to its cost. There are plenty more such projects in Hopewell's portfolio.

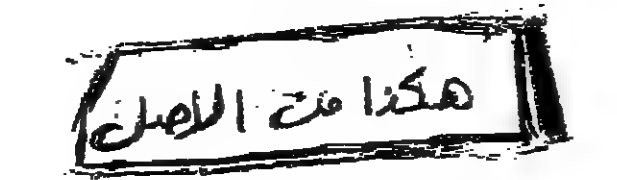
Managing director Gordon Wu has travelled the region over the past 10 years, agreeing grand schemes for transport and power projects in numerous countries, as well as building hotels and office blocks in Hong Kong.

Separately needed to diminish Bangkok's traffic congestion. As Mr Wu also remarked recently: "I am a marketer of projects."

HK\$3 billion next year. And the group needs to raise more than HK\$25 billion to finance planned projects over the next couple of years.



Tomorrow Play hard: racing at Happy Valley, gambling in Macau — pastimes of the colonial era Work hard: taking the 6 o'clock commuter train to Shenzhen, the territory's cut-price manufacturing base in China Plus: the shop window of the Far East



...a sea of capital
Britain
...olonys
visibility

Ladejo set for sharp angles

Stephen Bierley in Stockholm expects the 400m runner to show both his sides

STOCKHOLM'S Globe arena, which claims to be the largest spherical building in the world, has all the distant charm of a nuclear power station and out of keeping with the rest of this enchanting city, which is bidding for the 2004 Olympic Games. And, for all its futuristic stamp, the stadium houses an indoor track which belongs to the dark ages of RAF Cottesloe. Du'aine Ladejo, arguably Britain's best hope for a gold medal in the European Indoor Championships which begin today, took one look at the blue-carpeted boards yesterday and announced that he hopes of running a fast 400 metres were nil.

"When you are looking down the straight, the bends seem to be at right angles," he said. "I really can't up to international standards." This might also be said of the British team, but in Olympic year there are extenuating circumstances. Malcolm Arnold, Britain's chief coach, was always aware that the majority of the country's top athletes would not want to include Stockholm in their build-up to Atlanta and that this would be a chance for others to establish themselves.

For Ladejo, the European indoor and outdoor championships in 1994, Stockholm represents an international restoration after last year was all but wiped out by injury. The authorities continue to eye the 25-year-old Londoner, a graduate of Texas University, with a mixture of interest and alarm. Ladejo is very much his own man, holding views that are clearly at variance with those whose minds are still encased in blazer and tie. "I want people to be excited about athletics," he said. "I want them to remember what they have seen."

This was true of the Kelvin

Hall a couple of weeks ago when, in the 4x400m relay, Ladejo did a passable imitation of Sir Simon Rattle and was duly accused, to the accompaniment of crashing bores, of being disrespectful to both the French and the body athletic.

"Look, there was no way I was trying to belittle the French," he reiterated yesterday. "People in the crowd told me it was great I had pointed at them with the baton. It is in my nature to do something. And he will do it again - more than likely, although he would never wish to be predictable, on Sunday afternoon, when he should retain his indoor title. The only European to have run faster this year is Italy's Ashraf Saber.

It is entirely possible that Britain may have struck gold before then, for Bath's Jason Gardener, with his 60m run of 6.55sec in the GB v Russia international at Birmingham, is currently top of the European rankings.

Gardener has been lightly raced but confirmed his quality, also at Birmingham, when coming third behind Nigeria's Davidson Ederwa and Canada's world indoor champion Bruny Surin in the Rioch International.

The suggestion that the 20-year-old Gardener, a world junior medal winner over 100m, was here merely to gain experience was politely rejected. "The fastest man takes all," he said, brooking no arguments.

Should he win tonight, and his main rival appears to be Germany's Marc Stume, then the immediate tangible benefit would be that he would gain invitations to the early-spring grands prix. He was in the relay squad for the world championships in Gothenburg, Sweden, but did not qualify. His aim this summer is to win an individual place for Atlanta.

Ashia Hansen has failed to qualify for the triple jump final in her last three major championships but, provided the conditions do not require this should qualify with ease, her worst jump this winter being 14.15m.



On edge... Ladejo does not like the look of Stockholm's indoor bends

Nebiolo strikes it rich

PRIMO NEBIOLO, president of the International Amateur Athletic Federation, wearing another hat as head of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations, has driven a hard bargain with the International Olympic Committee to gain a much larger proportion of the IOC's television and marketing revenues from the Games in Atlanta this summer. Athletics gets the lion's share.

The IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch promised an extra \$22 million (\$21 million) to the 26 sports taking part, with sports split into four categories, based on television audience ratings at the Barcelona Games, for the distribution of the extra cash. This is in addition to the federations' traditional percentage of Olympic television income, which will be \$56.6 million in Atlanta.

Although Samaranch said the federations were happy with the deal, Nebiolo revealed that bigger claims were on the way. There would be further negotiations for Sydney in 2000 and the federations wanted a greater share from 2004 onwards, when the IOC will receive 51 per cent of Olympic revenues, up from 40 per cent.

For Atlanta the 26 sports federations, who each received \$1.446 million in Barcelona, will divide the \$56.6 million standard share equally, each taking \$2.177 million. In addition, athletics will be given \$6.5 million, some 20 per cent of the extra money, volleyball, basketball, swimming and gymnastics will net \$2.5 million each and tennis, hockey, rowing, handball, cycling and equestrianism each take \$1.7 million. The 14 other sports, including boxing, will get \$500,000 of the extra money promised by the IOC.

Nebiolo saw no danger of sports feeling they had been discriminated against by the Olympic cash system. "The federations are satisfied," he said.

Champion bid still an option for Right Win

RIGHT WIN has been reintroduced into the Smurfit Champion Hurdle betting at 20-1 by Coral's race analyst Richard Hannon decided to leave him in at yesterday's five-day declaration stage when 17 stood their ground.

There were no surprise absences, although David Elsworth has taken out Oh So Risky, who broke a blood vessel at Ascot last time, and relies on Absalom's Lady and Musa.

Hannon also has Right Win in the Clifton Supreme Novice Hurdle, for which there are still 37 entries, and will decide where to run according to the ground.

If the going continues to dry up Hannon may well decide to let his six-year-old go for the Champion as he believes the soft going stopped him at Kempton last time when he was fourth behind Alderbrook.

"Although he liked a bit of give in the Flat, there's a world of difference between soft going in the summer and soft during the winter," said Hannon.

A victory for Right Win in the Champion would be the worst result for Coral's who laid the horse heavily after he scored impressively at Sandown on his hurdling debut in January.

Alderbrook, who could do with some rain, leads the market at even odds followed by Danoli at 9-2 and Hotel Minella at 5-1. They then bet 6-1 Mysiv, 12-1 Collier Bay, another mudlark, and 20-1 Land Akar and Mack The Knife.

Hotel Minella, representing Aidan O'Brien and Charlie Swan, prefers a decent surface and would be strongly fancied to reverse Irish Champion Hurdle form with Collier Bay who beat him a head in testing conditions at Leopardstown.

The decision of Swan to ride Life Of A Lord in the Martell Grand National rather than ante-post favourite Lo Stragone has not caused too many problems for the latter's trainer, Thomas Tate, who has booked Jamie Osborne.

"Jamie is a super-sub and won on Lo Stragone at Newbury last season, so I'm quite happy," said Tate.

Dick Hern was a rare visitor to Wincanton yesterday and those who took the hint were rewarded with an 8-1 winner when his Mutavz won the opening race.

Hern was inevitably quizzed about the well-being of the 2,000 Guineas favourite Alhaarth and commented: "I'm happy about Alhaarth with him at this stage. We'll wait and see whether he has a run before the Guineas. It depends on the ground."

Brooks chaser the class act

MERE CLASS, trained by Charlie Brooks, stands out at the weights in today's feature event at Sandown, the Hare and Hound Grand National Gold Cup Chase, writes Chris Hawkins.

He was pulled up behind Percy Smollett at Ascot last time, but before that ran with great promise when three months third to Willaford at Sandown.

Mere Class (3.10) had Mr Boston 10 lengths behind him in fourth then and meets that rival on 7lb better terms this afternoon.

The card starts with an interesting clash between Zephyrus and Crown Equerry (2.00), preference being for the latter on his excellent third to Sir Leonard and Monticman over an inadequate two miles last time.

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Market Rasen programme

1.40 Mel Brown	3.15 East Newton
1.50 Shannon Cove	3.30 Tony's Galt
2.45 Tough Deal	4.50 Antrim Park

1.40 MARKET RASEN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
1.50 MARKET RASEN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
2.45 MARKET RASEN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

Sandown card with guide to the form

2.00 Crown Equerry	3.40 Royal Field
2.15 Herbert Buckton	4.10 On The Other Hand
2.10 Hare Chase	4.40 The Bouncer

2.00 SANDOWN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
2.15 SANDOWN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.40 SANDOWN HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

Ayr runners and riders

1.50 Shaggy Bend	3.30 Deep Decision (nb)
2.50 Sully	4.00 Sticky Dee
3.50 Sully	4.30 Strath The Cash

1.50 AYR HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
2.50 AYR HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.50 AYR HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

Results

CARLISE	1.40 (10/11) £2,500
1.50 (10/11) £2,500	2.00 (10/11) £2,500
2.10 (10/11) £2,500	2.20 (10/11) £2,500

1.40 CARLISE HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
1.50 CARLISE HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
2.00 CARLISE HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

Wincanton

2.50 (10/11) £2,500	3.00 (10/11) £2,500
3.10 (10/11) £2,500	3.20 (10/11) £2,500
3.30 (10/11) £2,500	3.40 (10/11) £2,500

2.50 WINCANTON HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.00 WINCANTON HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.10 WINCANTON HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

Towcester

2.50 (10/11) £2,500	3.00 (10/11) £2,500
3.10 (10/11) £2,500	3.20 (10/11) £2,500
3.30 (10/11) £2,500	3.40 (10/11) £2,500

2.50 TOWCESTER HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.00 TOWCESTER HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500
3.10 TOWCESTER HURDLE 11-11 (10/11) £2,500

RACELINE

0891 1684

SANDOWN	101	201
AYR	102	202
MARKET RASEN	103	203
GREYHOUNDS	122	222

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14 SPORTS NEWS

Cricket

Atherton aims to disarm explosive Sri Lankans

Mike Selvey in Faisalabad believes that England must meet flair with flair if they are to win their World Cup quarter-final tomorrow

IT SEEMS like only yesterday that England were last here and the cricketing world ground to a halt. Then, during the 1987-88 tour, Mike Gatting sat on his dignity and the Pakistani umpire Shakoor Khan refused to budge from his assertion that England's captain had been cheating in apparently trying to make a field change quite literally behind his back.

family. But those days are long gone and, for the past three weeks, followers of the tournament have come to regard this astonishing collection of cricketers as potential World Cup winners.

In last season's Benson and Hedges Cup final was a masterpiece, Ranatunga and Tilakaratne. Roshan Mahanama, who opens in Tests, does not get to the crease until the fall of the fifth wicket. They have great experience in this form of cricket, all but the openers have played more than 100 one-day internationals, a landmark passed by only five Englishmen.

to counteract extraordinary flair with a bit of their own. In particular, the Sri Lankans have turned the innings on its head, treating the first 15 overs, when the bowling side is hamstringing by fielding restrictions, as other teams treat the latter stages after laying down a solid foundation.

Mike Atherton reckons early wickets are the key (although that is not necessarily the solution: Kenya took their first wicket midway through the seventh over, but by then the score was 83) and to do that he may be prepared to sacrifice resilience for innovation.

New-ball swing would be part of the strategy, although that may be hampered should Dominic Cork's knee injury not stand up to today's fitness test. Yesterday Raymond Ilingsworth rated his chances of playing as 50-50.

However, Cork's loss would not be quite the disaster it might have seemed a few months ago. Whether because of injury, fatigue or a combination of both, his form has suffered out here and there is



Cork (left) ... 50-50 chance DeFreitas ... element of surprise

a feeling that Phil DeFreitas might prove more effective. It is also encouraging to see that Darren Gough has been practising his yorker with some vigour. This is his great strength and if he can produce plenty of them Sri Lanka might have a problem: fast in-swinging yorkers are notoriously difficult to hit for six.

In the interests of keeping the other side guessing, England's batting remains unsure of itself, with the fine start given by Atherton and Robin Smith against Pakistan squandered by the sort of collapses down the order that destroy momentum. Only Graham Thorpe remains consistent, and for England to progress further in the competition almost certainly requires a contribution from Graeme Hick.

The injury to Neil Fairbrother will probably remove the need for Illingworth to make a decision as to whether Jack Russell or Alec Stewart should keep wicket. Many still believe that England's strongest combination, and the one that allows the greatest number of options, has Stewart wearing the gloves.

But unless the trump card is thrown Mark Ramprakash straight in, then both Stewart and Russell will play.

Azharuddin hums up the situation

David Hopps in Bangalore on India's simple approach

AFTER THREE weeks the World Cup has thrown up the eight Pakistani television while commentators on Pakistan's match against New Zealand. Imran murmured on air that he was surprised his remarks were not censored. No comment in this World Cup will be richer with meaning.

land's media troupe, which might have some cause to be worn after record of 10 defeats in 11 overseas tours, and nine one-day defeats in their last 10 against Test-standard opposition.

But it is certain that until someone has the will and the imagination to break England's sleep mentality, to encourage a greater freedom of expression on and off the field, to defend wronged players if necessary and, most importantly, to stop bleating about the unfairness of it all, then fulfilment will be so much harder to find.

Nevertheless the World Cup has already had its moments. Imran Khan, former Test captain and putative politician, managed to appear briefly on television while commentating on Pakistan's match against New Zealand. Imran murmured on air that he was surprised his remarks were not censored. No comment in this World Cup will be richer with meaning.

Such as West Indies' concern over their decline; three Caribbean prime ministers have arranged an emergency meeting to discuss the development of a cricket academy and steps to strengthen the sport in schools from nursery age upwards — ideas much in Australian vogue.

They seem to have overlooked the English example, which consists of the PM watching as much cricket at Lord's as possible, and dining out a steady supply of OBEs, while singularly failing to arrest the collapse of cricket in the State sector.

In India the Pioneer newspaper has seen fit to publish the opinions on the state of English cricket of Rory Bremner, who takes the "sympathetic-celebrity-chummy-with-the-players" standpoint, assures us they are all jolly good chaps and blames much of England's decline on the perpetual sourness of the travelling media.

Here we go again. To be half-removed from England's tribulations is to recognise how infantile (and, to some extent, now) the debate in English) this futile debate is. Nothing could be duller, or less germane, than embarking upon a defence of Eng-

land's media troupe, which might have some cause to be worn after record of 10 defeats in 11 overseas tours, and nine one-day defeats in their last 10 against Test-standard opposition.

India acts to keep Pakistanis safe

MORE than 500 policemen are ringing the stadium in Bangalore where India will play Pakistan in a World Cup quarter-final tomorrow, and during the game 1,000 more will be deployed inside the grounds.

The measures have been taken because the Pakistan foreign ministry asked India to provide adequate protection for its players because of past threats made by the leader of the right-wing Hindu Shiv Sena party, Bal Thackeray.

A ministry spokesman said Pakistan had taken "serious notice" of comments by Thackeray, who has often been quoted by Indian and Pakistani newspapers as saying he would not allow the Pakistan team to play in India.

As the team arrived in India on Wednesday, newspapers back home quoted the Indian leader of the right-wing Hindu Shiv Sena party, Bal Thackeray, as reporting that Shiv Sena units had already been directed to enter the Mohali ground if they qualified for the semi-final there on March 14 — though as it

has turned out, if Pakistan reach the semi-finals they will go to Calcutta. "We were quite horrified by these threats," the ministry spokesman said. "When Thackeray first threatened two months ago to allow Pakistan to play in India he said he was responding to reported remarks by Imran Khan, the former Pakistan captain, that playing against India was like a jihad (holy war). He repeated the threat to the correspondents of many newspapers in Bombay, but has been silent for a few weeks while recovering from bypass surgery."

Bangalore's police chief Tirumala Srinivasulu said yesterday that "the precautions" had been taken. Of the 500 policemen so far involved, 200 were specifically trained in anti-riot operations.

"Tomorrow, he added, the stadium gates would be inter-related in some way, but initially I think I will want to be concentrating on management, selection and coaching policies within the senior England framework."

Acfield expects to recruit a working party of between six and eight people, drawn from different areas of experience, and probably including past and present England officials. "My view is that you only learn things by talking to people, and I want to speak with people who are not just involved with England now but who have been in the past."

"I don't think we should be afraid in the next few months of asking questions about how other countries run their national teams. There might be elements of other peoples' structure that can be taken on."

Acfield, a former Essex off-spinner and British sabre champion, has been appointed by the Test and County Cricket Board to review all aspects relating to

Soccer

Scots get ticket bonus

Ben Stewart

SCOTLAND supporters are celebrating a further 1,100 tickets for the European Championship game against England at Wembley on June 15.

There was also good news for England fans, with the organisers releasing 7,000 more tickets for the match against Holland three days later.

The Euro '96 director Glen Kirton revealed the details yesterday as the tournament celebrated its one millionth ticket sale.

"When we started selling tickets two years ago it was agreed that we would be fair to all teams," he said. "Our system guaranteed all finalists 7,000 tickets for every game they played. We said we would be as generous as we could, bearing in mind the constraints of security and safety, and Scotland's new allocation of 8,100 is the maximum we could live with."

The match is already a sell-out, along with France v Spain at the Stade de France, and Holland v Scotland, Portugal v Turkey, Turkey v Denmark, the Anfield quarter-final and the final.

The Georgian striker Mikhail Kavelashvili — an international team-mate of Georgi Kinkvadze — has returned to the Russian champions Spartak Vladikavkaz to think over a £1 million move to Manchester City Road, after he trained with the club last week.

City also hope to land the former Switzerland Under-21 midfielder Giuseppe Mazzarini on loan from FC Zurich until the end of the season.

The Sheffield United midfielder John Gannon is set to join Olham Athletic for a £100,000 deal. Huddersfield, are poised to complete the £150,000 signing of the Crew striker Rob Edwards.

Adrian Heath was yesterday confirmed as manager of Burnley in succession to Jimmy Mullin.



Over the paper moon ... Ilie Dumitrescu at Upton Park with the work permit that entitles him to play for West Ham tomorrow PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BARON

Dumitrescu and Hottiger clear to play

GOVERNMENT minister sipping just round the corner from Westminster Abbey answered the prayers of Ilie Dumitrescu and Marc Hottiger yesterday by granting the two foreigners their work permits.

"Cheryl Gillan and her Department for Education and Employment have bowed to pressure from within football and from some MPs to execute a U-turn since unequivocally turning down the play-

ers' applications a month ago because they had not met the criteria of playing 75 per cent of first-team club games the previous year. Critics argued that this overlooked the fact that they were players of proven international class.

Now Dumitrescu and Hottiger are in line to make their debuts for West Ham and Everton respectively this weekend, after a recent meeting at the DEE between the leading football bodies in England and Scotland and the players' union, the PFA, agreed to change the crite-

rion. Non-EU players will now be allowed one move between British clubs even if they have not played 75 per cent of first-team games but provided they have played 75 per cent of their country's international games in the two years prior to the transfer.

West Ham, who agreed to sign Dumitrescu from Tottenham for £1.5 million in January, are likely to have him on the bench tomorrow. "We are delighted the department has come up trumps," said the club's managing director

Peter Storrie. "Ile was beside himself when I told him." The Everton manager Joe Royle, who will include Hottiger (£750,000 from Newcastle) in his starting line-up, was also "delighted" but said: "Marc should not have been put through this anxiety. We said all along he was a proven international. He has been devastated by the whole affair, living with the fear that his career in England could be over."

Ironically neither team has suffered on the field. Both have enjoyed their best

run of the season over the past six weeks. "The PFA has been the leading voice of dissent on the issue, expressing worry at the number of foreign players taking the jobs of home-grown talent. Its spokesman Brendon Batson gave the change a cautious welcome. "It is a compromise that meets the needs, at the moment of the people involved in football. All we said is that, if there is a criterion, it should be adhered to. We were party to the agreed change and are happy with it."

Boxing

Wharton drops European title

HENRY WHARTON has signed a new two-year contract with his manager Mickey Duff and the renewed partnership's first act was to relinquish the European super-middleweight title.

Wharton was due to make his third defence against Frederick Sellier of France but Duff wants nothing to threaten his man's status as the WBC's leading contender to the new champion Sugar Boy Malina.

This is the second time Wharton has fought his way to the WBC No. 1 berth. He was beaten by Benn in his first crack at that title and 10 months later he lost to Chris Eubank in a World Boxing Organisation challenge.

Duff's champion bantamweight champion Johnny Arru has an infected hand and his defence against the Dane John Bredahl in Copenhagen has been postponed from March 29 to April 26.

Results

Soccer

EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS' CUP: Quarter-final, first legs: Dynamo Moscow 0, Rapid Vienna 1.

Golf

MOROCCAN OPEN (2nd of 4) Final round: M. O. (1st) 2nd, S. (1st) 3rd, M. (1st) 4th, R. (1st) 5th, D. (1st) 6th, J. (1st) 7th, B. (1st) 8th, C. (1st) 9th, G. (1st) 10th.

Tennis

WORLD INDOOR TENNIS: Round of 16: S. (1st) 2nd, M. (1st) 3rd, R. (1st) 4th, D. (1st) 5th, J. (1st) 6th, B. (1st) 7th, C. (1st) 8th, G. (1st) 9th, H. (1st) 10th.

Ice Hockey

World Cup (Finalist): Czech Republic 2, USA 1, Canada 0, Sweden 0, Finland 0, Norway 0, South Korea 0, Japan 0.

Basketball

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP (Final): Spain 80, France 78.

Billiards

UK CHAMPIONSHIP (Final): Mark King 9-4, Steve Davis 5-2.

Bowls

WOMEN'S ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIP: England 11-9, Scotland 11-10.

Fixtures

Soccer: LEAGUE OF WALES: Inter Cardiff v Ebbs Vale.

Sport in brief

Rugby: Any Bath player who is sent off or commits a serious disciplinary offence during the rugby league match against Wigan at Maine Road, Manchester, on May 8 will be dealt with by the Rugby Football Union, writes Robert Armstrong.

Skiing: The local favourite Ingeborg Helen Marken recorded her first World Cup win of the season in the last women's super-giant slalom in Lilla-hammst yesterday. Inspired by her compatriot Lasse Kjus, who won the last men's downhill on Wednesday, the 21-year-old Marken produced a faultless run on the Kvitfjell piste to win in 1min 33.88sec from Kathi Selinger of Germany and Italy's Isolda Kostner.

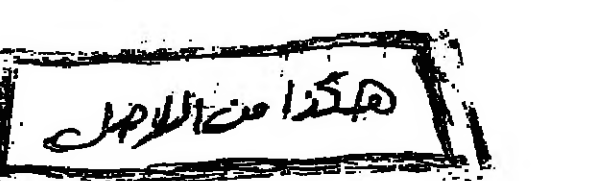
Squash: Simon Parke, the leading member of England's world title winning team, who two months ago was diagnosed as having testicular cancer, has withdrawn from the British Open, writes Richard Jago.

Rugby Union: The former All Black John Gallagher is set to make his first-team debut for Blackheath against Rosslyn Park tomorrow.

Bowls: England's hope of a first home international indoor title since 1994 was boosted yesterday by a 118-113 victory over Wales in Auchenleck. By halfway England were comfortably ahead 60-43 but Wales hit back to take a 10-point lead before England rallied over the last few ends to snatch their six-shot win.

neuv

still seeks sweet spot



Motor Racing

Richard Williams reports from Melbourne on the formidably speedy Formula One progress of the young IndyCar champion

Villeneuve fast to challenge

HE'S SLOW, isn't he? The Formula One designer watched Jacques Villeneuve's Williams-Renault disappear down the pit lane in a wash of noise. "I mean, if you're going to be fast, you're fast straight away."

"If you go out there and do decent lap times and don't bend the car and improve gradually, you'll never be really, truly quick. If you're quick and you bend the car a lot, it doesn't matter. You can always learn to stop bending the car. But you can't learn to be quick. You either are or you aren't."

That was the harshest of the many opinions expressed in recent weeks about Villeneuve, the 24-year-old French-Canadian driver who makes his grand prix debut in Australia this weekend and has been the object of intense scrutiny and speculation in the run-up to the season. But yesterday when he took his car out on to Melbourne's Albert Park circuit for the first time, the son of the late Gilles Villeneuve gave the firmest of hints that he will be a factor in this year's championship.

The day's two sessions were arranged to allow the drivers to familiarise themselves with the brand-new track. In that sense, it was the only time this year that Villeneuve could start a meeting on equal terms with the likes of Damon Hill and Michael Schumacher. And at the end of two hours of practice, on a track still slippery with dust, the rookie had the fastest time — a clear second ahead of Hill in the other Williams.

On paper, since qualifying does not take place until tomorrow, it counted for nothing. In the mind, it meant everything. Villeneuve now knows he can do it. And so do his rivals, none more than Hill, who left a road race during the day. Runner-up in the championship in the past two seasons, with 13 wins in 51 races, Hill went to bed contemplating the possibility that his best shot at the title is under threat from his own team-mate.

A lot of people were delighted to see the name Villeneuve back at the top of the timing sheets. Eleven years old when his father, the best-loved driver of his era, died in a Ferrari at Zolder in 1982, Jacques started his own racing career in Italian Formula Three. A year in Japanese Formula 3000 was followed by a move to the United States, where a good season in Formula Atlantic yesterday left him in a switch to IndyCar. In his IndyCar rookie year he finished second in the Indianapolis 500. The following season he won it, after a terrific strategic battle, and went on to take the series championship. Now he is in Europe and aims — although he would certainly not be rash enough to say so — to reverse Nigel Mansell's achievement of taking the Formula One and IndyCar titles in successive seasons.

He is in with a chance because he finds himself in the best car in the field, thanks to the enthusiastic support of Bernie Ecclestone, the Formula One ringmaster, who lobbied Frank Williams to put him alongside Hill in the team which starts the new season as firm favourites.

In Ecclestone's view, Villeneuve is potentially the only driver capable of matching Schumacher in a straight fight. His quick, bright manner and his off-duty wardrobe — a mixture of plaid shirts, jeans and Timberland boots accurately defined by Patrick Head, the Williams design chief, as "high grunge" — will make him, as Ecclestone hoped, a box-office asset.

No one yet really knows how he will cope. The only certainty is that he does not much resemble his father, who raced with his heart and soul but rarely with his head. Jacques seems a much cooler and more calculating customer. Nevertheless he is saving to cope with the same barrage of questions about his father that he faced on the IndyCar circuit, when his responses showed him to be uncommonly sensible and self-aware.

"I'm used to it," he said the other day. "It's normal. It doesn't disturb me. People want to ask. And I'm sure that if I were doing their jobs then I'd want to ask about that as well. So I just answer it for the thousandth time, always saying the same thing: that I'm my father's son, and I'll always be, and I'm proud of it. But I'm on my own road."

He may not carry a ghost around with him in the cockpit, but he shares one thing with his new team-mate: a father who was an infrequent presence around the house and with whom, even in life, he had an equivocal relationship. Curiously, both Bette Hill and Joann Villeneuve encouraged their sons to follow their late husbands' example, to the extent of paying for lessons at racing school (in France for Damon, in Canada for Jacques). Bette is here this weekend to cheer Damon on, while Jacques grew up in a garage where Jacques grew up.

Before he arrived here this week Villeneuve had completed more than 5,000 miles of testing with the new car, but it was noticeable at Estoril two weeks ago that he and Hill did not spend much time together. Some observers, always alert to the first signs of disruption, connected this with Hill's attempt during the winter to claim undisputed No. 1 status within the team, and Villeneuve's crisp dismissal: "There's no way I would race as a No. 2," he said. Frank Williams, as ever, left them to fight it out. "So far it's great," Villeneuve said when asked about the ambience in the team. "I haven't seen anything bad. You hang out with who you want to hang out with, and you don't talk to the people you don't want to talk to. I don't have enemies yet." The team seems the same as the ones I raced with in Japan and America. Normal people, very open, with a good sense of humour. It's not like they didn't treat me like a kid who could be put in the car for a few laps and then thrown away. Everybody was serious. I don't know if it's the same in other teams. From the outside, Formula One can look cold. Once you're inside the family, it isn't. Of Hill he said: "He's a nice guy. Everything seems to be all right. We haven't compared notes on our cars, but our engineers have. I don't know about the other drivers. You could make yourself crazy worrying about that stuff. I just try to do my job." At the moment he is more concerned with the technical differences than the cultural ones. "Formula One is a step higher on the technical side," he said. "There's a lot more money involved and the regulations allow you to make use of it. Everything is pushed to the limit. You get more new parts to play with, more bits and pieces. So it's probably easier to lose your way. But on the other hand, when you can't find your way you have more things to try." His aspirations for the season are not pitched too high, at least for public consumption. "Well, it's a great car," he said, "it's a great engine, and the lights go green on Sunday."



A quick word... Villeneuve (left) and Hill prepare to launch the Williams-Renaults around Albert Park STEVE HOLLAND

Watching him in constant conference around the Williams pit with his manager Craig Pollock, a 40-year-old half-Scott, half-Swiss who was once his ski instructor, these do not look like men accustomed to losing their way, or to being satisfied with putting up a good show. Such an air of self-confidence among new boys can get the paddock's back up. Unless, of course, it is backed up by deeds when the lights go green on Sunday.

When he tested with the team at Silverstone last year, the impact was mutual. "They didn't treat me like a kid who could be put in the car for a few laps and then thrown away. Everybody was serious. I don't know if it's the same in other teams. From the outside, Formula One can look cold. Once you're inside the family, it isn't." Of Hill he said: "He's a nice guy. Everything seems to be all right. We haven't compared notes on our cars, but our engineers have. I don't know about the other drivers. You could make yourself crazy worrying about that stuff. I just try to do my job." At the moment he is more concerned with the technical differences than the cultural ones. "Formula One is a step higher on the technical side," he said. "There's a lot more money involved and the regulations allow you to make use of it. Everything is pushed to the limit. You get more new parts to play with, more bits and pieces. So it's probably easier to lose your way. But on the other hand, when you can't find your way you have more things to try." His aspirations for the season are not pitched too high, at least for public consumption. "Well, it's a great car," he said, "it's a great engine, and the lights go green on Sunday."

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Schumacher soon has the new Ferrari firing

MICHAEL Schumacher's public protestations that he has little chance of a third successive Formula One title this season were belied yesterday when he posted fourth-fastest time overall in the new Ferrari F310 in two pre-practice sessions for Sunday's Australian Grand Prix, writes Alan Henry in Melbourne. In demonstrating the long-term potential of the new Italian machine, the German's best time was beaten only by the powerful Renault-engined Williams cars of Jacques Villeneuve and Damon Hill and the similarly powered Benetton B196 of Jean Alesi. "I don't think we can fight for pole position," he said. "I expect that Williams and Hill are the best prepared to fight for pole position or victory in the race, so I think there will not be a big challenge between the two of us this season."

Villeneuve was a second faster than Hill around the 3.27-mile Albert Park city-centre circuit, although Hill and his lawyers were distracted by a row over insurance clauses in his FIA "super licence".

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Golf

Seve still seeks the sweet spot

Michael Britten in Rabat **P**LUS ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Despite new clubs, a new caddie and fresh optimism, the golf between Seve Ballesteros and the cream of the PGA European Tour remains a chess. The Spaniard's first round of the 1996 season was a replica of his last of 1995. His 78 here when the Moroccan Open began yesterday left him 10 shots behind Peter Hedblom and facing a struggle for survival today. Ballesteros's return to the PGA European Tour at Royal Dar es Salam after five months of self-imposed exile contained so many echoes of his defeat at Oak Hill by Tom Lehman that it was also a case of déjà vu. Once again he spent more time in the trees than on the fairways, and he found the greens just as elusive. He hit only five in regulation, and the only birdie to appear on his six-over-par card arrived as a result of a 15-foot putt at the 9th, his last hole. "It was the best score possible the way I played," shrugged. "I have no confidence and I hit the ball all over the place. My clubs can't find the middle of the clubhouse any more."

Herron soars as Faldo flops

David Davies in Coral Springs **T**M HERRON, a 28-year-old from Minnesota whose claims to fame are sketchy indeed, produced an extraordinary 10-under-par 62 to take a substantial early lead in the Honda Classic at the Eagle Trace club near here in Florida yesterday. Herron is in his first season on the US professional tour but played in the 1993 Walker Cup at Interlachen, Minnesota when the Americans prevailed 19-5. He won all his three matches, beating Padraig Harrington in the singles, but until yesterday that was the extent of his international success. His 62 ties the course mark set by Dan Pohl in 1989 but, as it contained 20 putts, was also a good ball-striking round. "I had heard this place was brutally hard," said Herron, adding, as if it were an everyday occurrence, that "when you putt well, these scores happen". His round was the more remarkable for the fact that much of it was completed in a brisk breeze that severely troubled the other competitors. The 1989 Open champion Mark Calcavecchia, for instance, felt he had played "pretty damned good" for his 67, the morning's second-best score. Even Nick Faldo, whose

77 threatens a missed cut, felt that his swing was "nearer good than bad" and was "just a smidgen over". But with water hazards on 18 holes he now needs a near-miraculous recovery if he is to be competing over the weekend. Analysing his round in a detached and welcome fashion, Faldo concluded that he had been pulling his second shots and had missed four greens on the left. Asked whether, in his usual workaholic fashion, he would be practising all afternoon, he said he would more likely be trying to sleep it off. "I had to be up at 5am for the pro-am and 6am for this round, and I'm tired," said the man whose 21-year-old

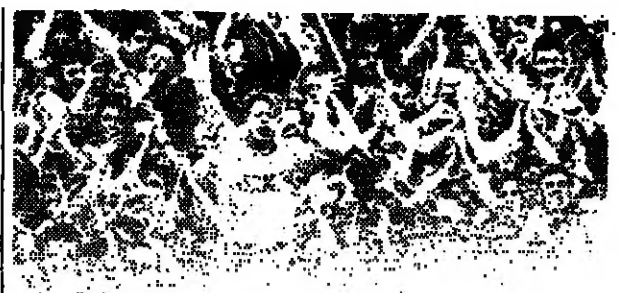
girlfriend Brenna Cepelak followed his every step. Sandy Lyle, unusually, had a distracted look about him on Wednesday and was not his normal communicative self. It turned out that he was wondering where his game had gone because, after a promising start to the year with a top-10 and top-20 finish, he had lost timing and confidence. But overnight he found a little of both and it was sufficient to get him round in 70. "I think I've been practising too much," he said. "My muscles are sore after trying out about a dozen drivers. I wasn't looking forward to the first round because I was hitting the ball so poorly, but I'll certainly take a 70." The official tour stats support Lyle's search for a driver. He is averaging 290 yards off the tee, comfortably in the "immense" category, but is hitting only 61 per cent of the fairways at which he aims. John Daly, who averages 288 yards off the tee, was playing immediately behind Faldo and attracted his usual crowd of roisters and rednecks, intent on seeing him belt the ball out of sight. He managed this often enough to get to two under par by the turn, despite distractions such as a mobile phone that rang from under a baby's pushchair blanket, but later dropped a shot for a 71.

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Rugby League

Saints take risk on Hunte in semi-final

Paul Fitzpatrick **S**T HELENS sprang a major surprise yesterday when they named Alan Hunte, their Great Britain winger, in the side for tomorrow's Challenge Cup semi-final against Widnes at Wigan. Hunte, Saints' leading scorer in five of the past six seasons, has undergone a major reconstruction of his left knee and has not played since the Premiership Trophy game at Leeds last May. He replaces the teenager Joey Hayes, who suffered hamstring damage in the win over Salford in the previous round and declared himself unfit. Otherwise the side remains the same. The Saints coach Shaun McKee insisted he was not gambling by playing Hunte in the starting line-up. "We have had Alan tested vigorously and he has had no problems whatsoever," he said. The Hulme brothers, David and Paul, return for Widnes. Paul, who comes into the pack, plays his first game since the league match with Rochdale on January 21, and David is on the substitutes' bench after playing only once since November, when he suffered a head injury. The Challenge Cup final on April 27 is already approaching a sell-out with more than 50,000 of the 77,000 available tickets already gone.



Extra time Edited by Jeremy Alexander

Jumper caught in tug of kudos

ALINA ASTAFEI is due to represent Germany in the high jump in the European Indoor Championships in Stockholm this weekend. She could fairly expect to do the same in the Olympics in Atlanta; she was silver in last year's world championships. But it is not so simple. In 1992 she won Olympic silver for Romania. There is a tug of kudos, enormous expense to find one that will be an Olympic medalist. Romania spent a million marks (£450,000) preparing Astafei. Mironov, a former communist, has had a similar dispute with the tennis player Irina Spirlea, and accuses both of deserting Romania. The minister has yet to say how much money he wants but is angry at Astafei's success abroad: "It's not fair the rich could steal the poor's work." Heiner Henze, head of the German NOC, said yesterday that no money would change hands but "we have talked to their NOC and will talk again." He mentioned sports development programmes. This satisfied Azerbaijan when the gymnast Valery Belenki moved recently to Germany.

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Sixth column

FIFA's international board, meeting in Rio de Janeiro tomorrow, will consider formalising and extending the advantage rule. Instead of just waving play on if a fouled player's team remain in possession, the referee would be allowed to let play continue as in rugby, sometimes 15 seconds, before calling play back and awarding the free-kick if insufficient advantage has accrued. The idea comes from the FA and could be introduced on July 1. The referee will not (yet) be allowed to watch a replay of the incident while playing advantage. Fifa is making its own recommendation on speed-up play. It is another whetstone from rugby: leaving spare balls around the ground to save waiting for the one in the crowd. Tried in the under-17 world championships in Ecuador, with hosts of ball boys, it raised the actual playing time from 60 minutes to 78, out of 90.

CRICKET'S World Cup has upset the natural order in all three host countries. A Sri Lankan umpire has been reported for distracting batsmen in the club match between Kandy and Kalutara last Saturday; he was listening to Sri Lanka v India on the radio. Monday had been declared a holiday for government workers in Madras so they can watch the quarter-final against Pakistan; but they will have to make up for it by reporting for work on Saturday week. Bookmakers in Karachi say business is thriving, with the minimum stake 1,000 rupees (£18); the Islamic faith forbids betting. KENYA's president got the message eventually and responded with one. Having initially overlooked last year's 75-run win over West Indies, Daniel arap Moi cabled the team "overjoyed by the news of your victory over the world's most feared team". He showed his understanding of the world game by rating the performance "the best in the African continent above the Kalahari" and recognised it as "not a fluke". Kenya lost by 144 runs to Sri Lanka in their next match. Moi was particularly gratified by the team's composition, "now 80 per cent indigenous. This proves we have the potential of producing a world-class team in a sport that has not been very popular to us Africans." That should be we Africans. A FUNKY Italian was one last weekend when the referee called off the match between Foggi and Salerno. The pitch invasion was not started by bookmakers. CONI, which oversees the Totocalcio pools system, said only one of the 11 coupons that had 13 correct results out of 13 had Salerno down to win. They were leading 3-1. The lost prize was 12 billion lire (£5 million), which would have been a record. LOUIS LINT, Sarfu's president, has probably lost the springbok with the chief executive whose sacking was reported here last week. His autocratic act is seen as the last nail in the springbok's coffin. The Emblem Commission of the National Sports Council said yesterday the springbok represented racial privilege from the apartheid era. It recommends the King Protea as the new emblem. The NSC will decide on March 30. TWO Australian sailors who won the Tornado bronze in the last Olympics in Barcelona are heading for court before Atlanta. One is at odds with the other. John Forbes, with a new crew, has asked the New South Wales Supreme Court to rule on the validity of the Australian Yachting Federation's selection process, which gave his former partner Mitch Booth the nod. Booth had different partners in the two qualifying events. Forbes says this invalidates Booth's claim and the AIF has strayed from its criteria. There had been earlier discussion when Booth arranged to meet Forbes at the latter's boatyard to collect gear which belonged to him. Booth found the place locked and no Forbes, so he nipped over the fence and took his mast. A charge of trespass is in the offing.

A little flat on the action to the sea

A little flat on the action to the sea



Lyle... I'll take my 70



Strang... struck down

Ladejo sets out his stall, page 13

England bank on strike bowlers, page 14

Dumitrescu wins his permit, page 14

Villeneuve settles in fast, page 15

SportsGuardian

MORE TROUBLE IN THE WEST INDIES CAMP

Lara sparks new row

David Hopps on the latest thunderbolt from the World Cup's stormiest team

BRIAN LARA has become embroiled in another damaging West Indian controversy after an Indian magazine reported that he had indulged in an extraordinary denunciation of his team-mates and the management after their shock World Cup defeat against Kenya.

Anuruddha Bahal, principal correspondent of Outlook magazine, claims he has a tape of Lara's outburst in which the batsman accuses West Indies of bad management and poor team spirit.

More contentiously, Lara is further quoted as saying that West Indies' defeat against Kenya, the greatest shock in World Cup history, "wasn't that bad" because the opposition were black. To lose to South Africa, one of the favourites and West Indies' opponents in the quarter-final and still predominantly a white-based side, would be "a different matter altogether".

Only 48 hours after West Indies salvaged considerable self-respect by defeating Australia in Jaipur, so gaining a place in the last eight, they are again in disarray. Richie Richardson has resigned as captain effective after the World Cup. Andy Roberts has been sacked as coach, and Wes Hall, the tour manager, had already indicated that he would not be continuing in his post. Now this.

Lara, the most talented batsman in the world, temporarily walked out of West Indies' tour of England last summer after a row with Richardson and then took a self-imposed sabbatical from the international game. He has now become involved, however unwarily, in an incident that threatens to destroy West Indies' morale just as it was showing fleeting signs of recovery.

Lara is assuredly no racist, and even Bahal yesterday preferred to depict his comments as "banter" rather than suggesting that they possessed any racist overtones. But it is Lara's alleged condemnation of the West Indies set-up which will cause most anger in the Caribbean.

"Yeah, there are problems in the team," Lara supposedly remarked. "Some of us don't even talk to some of the other. It's that bad. Our guys just stick in their rooms. If you have a good team but a bad management, you can maybe get along. But if you have a bad team and a bad management, you get fucked. After this defeat, I think they'll be forced to sort out some of this shit."

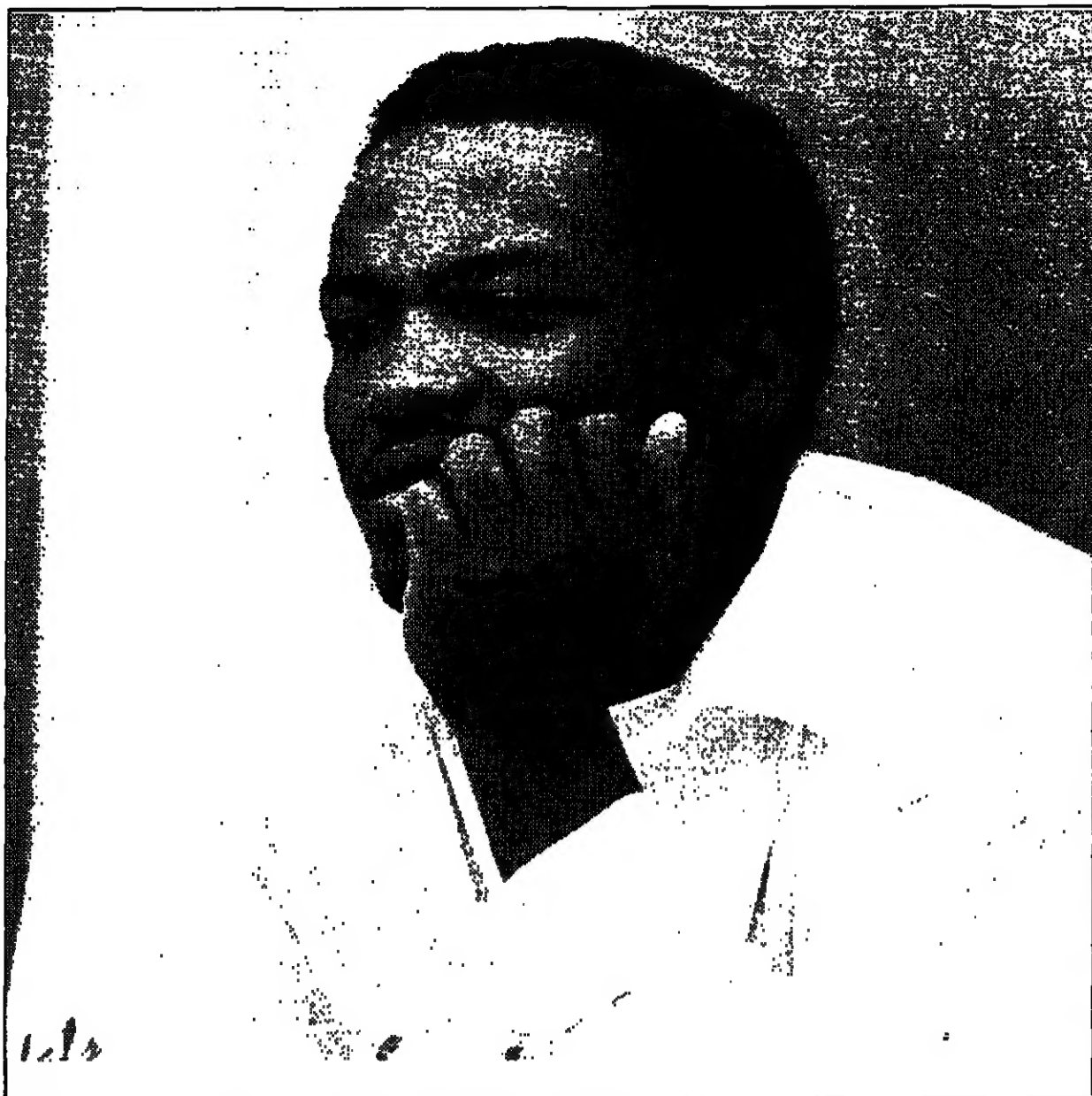
Richardson, Hall and Lara, hardly a trio made in heaven, had a tense dinner together on Tuesday evening. Before practice yesterday Lara withdrew a lecture from Hall at the Ashok Hotel in Delhi. And a West Indies official, invited to defend Lara, exploded that he had no wish to do anything of the sort.

Lara, in transit in Delhi before travelling to Karachi for the quarter-final, telephoned London yesterday to speak to his lawyers and agent. The upshot of that was a refusal to comment.

However, his agent, Jonathan Barnett, said Lara denied the South Africa remarks: "It is not a quote from Brian. He's made it up. Brian is the least racist man in the world."

"I have just spoken to Brian about it and he denies it. He said: 'I was asked if that was our worst defeat and I said no, that was when South Africa knocked us out of the World Cup in '82.'"

Vinod Mehta, Outlook's editor, stood by his reporter, although he doubted whether there was a tape: "Obviously we would not make all this up. We have sanitised some of his more virulent remarks. There is so much detail in the story that I don't think Mr Lara will deny it. There were so many in the dressing room at the time who will back him up, and he did seem to want to unburden himself."



Foot in mouth... Lara could be in further trouble for criticising management and team-mates PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

Super League goes to war

Paul Fitzpatrick on the day rugby league's power factions indulged in a verbal slugfest

RUGBY league's dream of a future funded by Rupert Murdoch's millions suffered a new setback yesterday as rival officials from Britain and Australia traded insults and a judge in Sydney considered an application to have Super League banned worldwide.

Ken Arthurson, the Australian Rugby League's executive chairman, led the abuse by pouring scorn on the Rugby Football League's proposal to set up a competition in Australia if Super League, as seems certain, cannot start there.

Arthurson dismissed the plan, outlined in an Australian court yesterday, as "laughable", adding that he doubted whether they could promote blanket sales in Alaska. Just look at their record: in 100 years the English Rugby League has succeeded in expanding the game no further than its origins of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

"They have plenty of nerve if they are going to try something like this. I don't think people will fall for it. It's just another one of their [World Super League] tricks."

A spokesman for the Rugby League responded by branding the ARL "sinister".

The ARL, having won the 51-day court battle to stop the Australian Super League, yesterday sought to extend the ban worldwide. If that were enforced, European Super League would be prevented from starting in Paris on March 29 and the £87 million that the sport is due to receive from News Corporation over the next five years would be jeopardised.

The ARL seems bent on grinding Super League out of existence wherever it rears its head. Justice James Burchett is expected to hand down his final orders on the dispute today. The RFL, which is confident that he will reject the ARL's application, is certain to go back to court should he grant it.

Maurice Lindsay, the English game's chief executive, relieved that the European Super League was legally represented yesterday.

"Had our QC, Alec Shand, not been there we might have been ambushed with our game seriously threatened. As it is, our QC objected strongly to the ARL's outrageous request and we have every confidence in Justice Burchett to reject this contemptible application."

Paul Harrison, the RFL's media manager, said: "Perhaps now people will realise just how sinister the ARL can be. How can they claim to have the good of the game at heart when they propose actions which would effectively kill off rugby league outside Australia?"

"When you consider the new-found enthusiasm for the game in France, Fiji and elsewhere, such an attitude is to be deplored."

Crazy call for Botham is a cry for help



Paul Weaver

ENGLAND's cricket is beginning to resemble a murder mystery. A game of Cluedo, even. Did Raymond Illingworth do it in the dressing room with a piece of lead piping? Did Mike Atherton do it in the committee room with a candlestick? The Test and County Cricket Board's spring meeting came up with no solutions at Lord's this week. Nothing new there. But at least it did not respond to the latest piece of numbskull thinking to come from the World Cup camp.

Many of England's senior cricketers, we are told, would like Ian Botham to replace Illingworth as manager after the World Cup. This would suggest that they have not only forgotten how to play the game but also a green pepper short of a chicken jacket.

Since his retirement in 1993 Botham, through his television appearances and his various newspaper columns, has said nothing to challenge the opinion that everything he really knows about cricket could be written on a frog's ear with space to spare. England's recent performances may be enough to make those of us on Sky-vigil kick the cathode tube and head for a darkened room with a good bottle and a Leonard Cohen tape, but Botham is not the answer.

As a player the man was a colossus. Opponents, who liked him as much as they feared him, discovered that a cricket match is never over until the fat man swings. As recently as 1992, during the last World Cup, he beat Australia almost single-handedly. Then 36, and with the umpires looking younger every day, he took four wickets in seven balls for no runs and then struck a violent 53. It was a roar from an extinct volcano.

Compton, Garry Sobers and Ted Dexter, all of whom knew much more about Test cricket than about Wisden, Compton says Dermot Reeve cannot play, which is to miss the point entirely about Reeve's cricket. Sobers' idea of captancy was to beat a team all on his own, and Dexter, brave and brilliant, who batted like a young infantry officer charging into the Somme with a fistful of Brooke and a posthumous VC on his mind, preferred to talk about golf and astrology when he was chairman of selectors.

David Gower was the worst captain on the county circuit and in charge of England he was a disaster. Fred Trueman, England's best bowler, hardly illuminates the game's mysteries with his head-shaking splutterings — "I don't know what's going on out there" — on radio.

This is only a wild guess, but Botham was probably a duffer at running the pitch and Shakespeare a dead loss when it came to explaining the difference between defining and non-defining clauses. The great do not always see what they are doing. In cricket one seldom forgets out of limited players such as Illingworth and Geoff Boycott, who had to think about it a great deal.

A"SOURCE close to the England camp" tells the opinion that everything he really knows about cricket could be written on a frog's ear with space to spare. England's recent performances may be enough to make those of us on Sky-vigil kick the cathode tube and head for a darkened room with a good bottle and a Leonard Cohen tape, but Botham is not the answer.

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YET why is extravagant sporting talent so often mistaken for some deep and mystical understanding of the game? The wickedly funny American critic Gore Vidal, in one of his recent canisters of literary laughing gas, said: "Having no talent is no longer enough." But having genius is not enough either.

Botham was a great player. That is all. So were Denis



Wainwright was target say Scots

Robert Armstrong

SCOTLAND last night accused the England rugby team of "targeting" their captain Rob Wainwright, who was injured in last Saturday's international and is still suffering from concussion.

On Wednesday a Five Nations disciplinary commission cleared the England prop Jason Leonard of punching Wainwright during the Calcutta Cup match. Scotland immediately registered their disappointment at the decision but yesterday went further.

Their team manager Jim Telfer said: "Actually I don't like using TV evidence when the referee or touch judges have not seen anything. But if a side wants to target players — if that is what they were doing — then something has to be done about it."

"If anybody wanted to target players in this Scottish side then there are only one or two that are vital to us winning or losing, and Rob [Wainwright] certainly comes into that category."

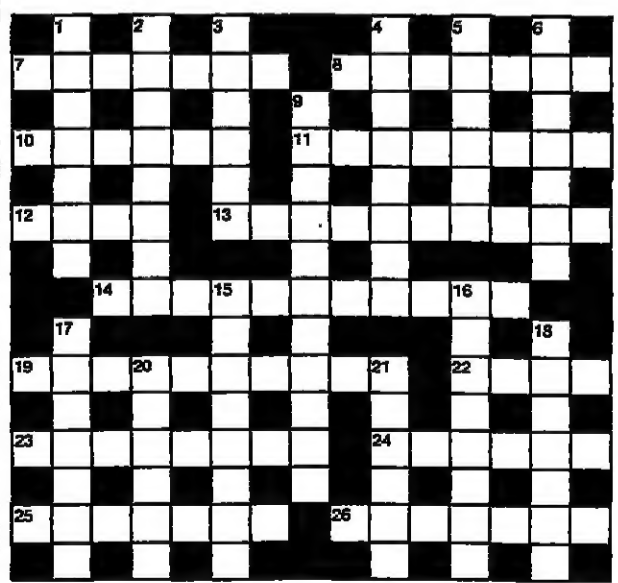
"He was just a passenger for most of the game. We thought about replacing him but he is such a vital player that the hope was always there that he would recover. I still adhere to the view that Leonard committed an act of foul play."

Twickenham, who made sure Leonard was as well prepared as possible to answer the charge, considered the matter closed. Scotland could have appealed against the decision but have accepted it reluctantly.

Leonard is now certain to be in an unchanged England team to play Ireland tomorrow week when it is named today.

Guardian Crossword No 20,595

Set by Rufus



- Across**
- 7 Bigger gets state hand-out (7)
 - 8 Proposed feed for development (7)
 - 10 He reviles a blockhead employer (6)
 - 11 Certainly in drink, but restrained (8)
 - 12 Hold up in Paddington, say (4)
 - 13 Christian virtue fills a need, somehow (4-6)
 - 14 A deep melody (3-8)
 - 19 No man's land taken over by Napoleon (6,4)
 - 22 Inadequate tip? (4)
 - 23 Wild glen redeveloped for housing (8)
 - 24 Ascent is difficult for the poor (4-2)
 - 25 They may lead the masses (7)
- Down**
- 26 Polish girl with German complaint (7)
 - 1 Rose and disconnected speaker (7)
 - 2 Keep quiet about suit (8)
 - 3 Noisy drinker? (6)
 - 4 Switch positions from time to time (3,3,2)
 - 5 Points to one of several children as being bright (6)
 - 6 Quite a few part with a pound (7)
 - 9 Infant being looked after for no great cost (5,6)
 - 15 They play by themselves (8)
 - 16 Girl to sign for earnings (8)
 - 17 Girl has the goods, but doesn't seem to know it (7)
 - 18 Informal wear for amateur sportsman (7)
 - 20 Motorway place setting (6)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,594

DOWN

1 ROSE
2 QUIET
3 DRINKER
4 SWITCH
5 POINTS
6 PART
9 INFANT
15 THEMSELVES
16 SIGN
17 GOODS
18 AMATEUR
20 SETTING

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In 1934 Truman anticipated "retirement on a virtual pension in some minor county office". A few weeks later he was selected for the Senate.
Noam Chomsky

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